The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

ONLY ONE KIND OF FREEDOM?

In the West's idyll of Eastern Europe, some of the principals are less obliging than others. While Poles, Hungarians, East Germans and (with some reservations) Czechoslovaks have rushed to embrace the Western dream, their Balkan neighbors have now had the temerity to elect somewhat more cautious reform Communists. In June Bulgaria's renamed Socialist Party defeated an opposition coalition running on a radical free-market platform. In May President Ion Iliescu's National Salvation Front won more than 80 percent of the vote in Romania. Both elections were deemed fair by international observers, if spotted by the kind of abuses one might expect to find in places without a long electoral tradition.

Three weeks after its election the Iliescu government used force to disperse protesters in Bucharest's University Square, later clearing the city center with the help of thousands of miners brought in from the north ("Grimy, sooty men," *The New York Times* called them with distaste). Turning to their *Britannicas* for some potted anthropology, Western reporters explained the Bucharest crackdown as the product of Balkan primitivism and the despotic traditions of the Ottoman Empire. They showed less interest in the precarious character of Romania's new democratic politics, being content to act as cheerleaders for the sort of extraparliamentary revolt that they would surely have deplored had it taken place in Prague's Wenceslas Square—not to mention outside the White House.

The U.S. government, meanwhile, halted aid, boycotted Iliescu's inauguration and deferred a decision on restoring Romania's most favored nation status—never a problem in the cozy days of friendship with Nicolae Ceausescu. The newly free countries of Eastern Europe, it appears, are to be given only a single choice: full tilt to the free market or be treated as pariahs.

THE C.I.A. IN INDONESIA
Aryeh Neier

CIVIL RIGHTS FOR THE 90s
Diana R. Gordon

SUDAN UNDER THE BOOT
Stephen Hubbell

DOWN AND OUT IN THE DELTA
Clay Hathorn

SAKHAROV'S JOURNEY
Adam Hochschild

STATE OF THE ART WORLD
Arthur C. Danto

TREE WAR IN THE ROCKIES

OLD-GROWTH FORESTS—THE LAST STAND

WILBUR WOOD

Roundup, Mont.

From the tropical rain forests of the Amazon to the temperate rain forests of the Pacific Northwest, from Borneo to the Tibetan Plateau, humanity's war against trees lurches into its final phase. In the United States the primary battle in this war is between those who would save the few remaining old-growth forests—mainly on public land—and those who would eliminate them.

Mostly I live on the edge of that war. But I do heat my house with wood, so come fall I am prowling the hills for dead pine, scouting the river valley for downed cottonwood. I pick up the trimmings from elm, green ash and silver poplar trees in our town. I use ax, handsaw, chain saw to work up loads to haul home in my pickup. More scavenger than predator, still I am connected by this work to that basic industry called logging.

I walk out of my valley town into the hills across the river and from a ridgetop I turn my gaze west, fifty, a hundred miles over the rumpled yellow-brown prairie of central Montana to the first ranges of the Rocky Mountains, white-mantled along the horizon.

In these mountains are forests, but the Rockies are not blessed with the abundant rains and snows of mountains farther west, nearer the Pacific. Trees here do not grow as densely or as tall, or with such exuberant variety of species, as in the great rain forest that sweeps north out of California into British Columbia and Alaska. Yet even here, as in that coastal forest, ancient trees fall steadily under blade and torch.

(*Continued on Page 53*)

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LETTERS.

'WHEN THE CORN DON'T GROW . . .'

Baltimore

I am honored to have had my work mentioned by such a renowned author as Herbert Kohl in the context of reviewing Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary*, a book I admire greatly ["The Teacher as Learner," April 16]. Coincidentally, just before the review was published I met Mike Rose for the first time at a conference where we spent a two-hour breakfast heartily embracing similarities in thinking and tentatively exploring possible differences. We left agreeing to think about future collaborations. Little did we realize that someone else had already thought to link our work!

I am a great fan of Kohl's writings, which I have used with my teacher education students because I believe strongly that he, like Mike Rose, provides the best model for the developing teacher—don't become a slave to teaching a particular curriculum but work to teach the students in front of you, allowing *their* needs to create the curriculum and the method.

To correct two minor inaccuracies in the review: I am not a member of the education faculty but a senior research associate at the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University—not College. I am on leave from the education faculty at Michigan State University.

I strongly agree that all children deserve to be taught by someone who maintains high expectations for their learning potential, and that when children don't learn we need to look to the teaching rather than to the child. (A parent in rural Louisiana once said to me, "When the corn don't grow we don't say what's wrong with the corn, we ask if it rained enough, if the soil was good, or if we planted at the right time. How come y'all always trying to figure what's wrong with our kids?") As is Kohl, I am thoroughly familiar with and terribly tired of children being labeled incompetent (i.e., "at risk," "learning disabled," and even "of the underclass") as a result of our lack of ability to find ways to teach them.

Perhaps Kohl implied a greater divergence in our positions in order to make some important points, but I do take issue with some representations of my work. I have never said nor do I subscribe to the notion that teachers "must insist that poor and minority students learn skills now, even if it involves boring drill and sternly enforced practice." Nor do I in any way disagree with what could be read as a counter to my position that "all children are capable of functioning in creative, self-motivated ways and are capable of thinking critically, expressing ideas and developing well-formed opinions." As a matter of fact, in the article Kohl quotes, I state explicitly:

> I run a great risk in writing this—the risk that my purpose will be misunderstood, the risk that those who subject black and other minority children to day after day of isolated, meaningless, drilled "subskills" will think themselves vindicated. That is not the point. Were this another paper . . . I would explain that I believe that skills are best taught through meaningful communication, best learned in meaningful contexts. I would further explain that skills are a necessary, but insufficient aspect of black and minority students' education. . . . *Let there be no doubt: a "skilled" minority person who is not also capable of critical analysis becomes the trainable, low-level functionary of dominant society, simply the grease that keeps the institutions which orchestrate his or her oppression running smoothly.* (My emphasis.)

I heartily agree with Kohl's statement that I challenge progressive educators to show how their ideas can produce success for poor and minority children. But I challenge all educators to do that. My point in writing the article and a subsequent one which elaborated some of the original points ("The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children," *Harvard Educational Review*, August 1988) is that I do have higher expectations for those educators who call themselves progressive, radical, democratic, etc. But I continue to see that those educators, too, can lock out parents, educators, even students of color from having input on how best to educate our own children.

By example, one thoughtful white teacher with whom I've been corresponding has told me of his well-known progressive school in California, which seeks, often unsuccessfully, to maintain a racial and cultural balance. Yet the school consistently has problems with African-American children—especially boys—many of whom it has labeled "behavior disordered" and/or exhibit a lack of parental controls. And the African-American parents continue to remove their children—especially boys—from the school. Although these are progressive, open, liberal educators, they view the problem as residing in the children and their parents and not with the school's structure or curriculum. Even more to the point, they believe the parents are not being forthright when they insist that the children are fine at home, but that somehow the school is presenting the problem. Consequently they usually don't attempt to engage parents in dialogue to resolve the problems collaboratively.

About a year ago, I was to make a presentation to the annual meeting of a group of progressive educators. Of the seventy or so people present, there was one other African-American woman. This group—composed of some wonderful and usually thoughtful individuals—was busily engaged in discussions about educating all students for a democratic society. One presenter gave an impassioned speech about the need to build alliances across classes, ethnicities and cultural groups. Only the other African-American woman, a few others and myself seemed to be able to recognize how bizarre the scene was. These people, who thought of themselves as progressives and who diligently sought integrated education for their children, had apparently not noticed that they were operating in an elite little bubble as they attempted to develop means to educate "other people's children." They were discussing the issues among themselves, and the poor and "minority" communities they were concerned about had almost no representatives among their members. (I should add that this group is now slowly coming to terms with the ironies of its stance and appears to be reaching out to become more inclusive.)

This scene, and the literally dozens of other similar ones I've experienced, led me to write those articles. I'm much less concerned about the specifics of instruction than I am about the nature of the relationships developed in education. Although there are significant exceptions, I know that many of the white educators I work with and sometimes truly like don't have the slightest inkling about what people of color say about them and how they view their actions in the classroom. They have no idea in part because they have not asked, and in part because they have not truly listened when an unsolicited opinion has been offered. Consequently, they have been shocked and sometimes hurt when I write about the deeply rooted anger that many people of color feel toward them. My hope in writing was to show the need for dialogue, and to give people a base from which to begin.

Thus, I am saddened when I feel that what I've written is interpreted as continuing the useless dichotomy about competing methodologies. If asked, I will continue to say that we need both process- and skills-oriented instruction. But what we need even more is to open up the dialogue *about* what we need to those from *all* the groups we attempt to educate. My hope for all educators is that they rid their eyes of their own cultural blinders to see, *really see*, the students in front of them. And that they learn to utilize the resources that parents and educators of color can provide to help destroy those blinders.

Lisa D. Delpit

AUTHOR'S QUERY

For an authorized biography of saxophonist and composer Pepper Adams (1930-1986), I would appreciate hearing from his friends and associates, especially those who corresponded with him or have materials or reminiscences of his life and work.

Gary Carner
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EDITORIALS.

Now We Are 125

Happy birthday to us! July 6, 1990, marks the beginning of *The Nation*'s 125th year of continuous publication, and we want to invite you to the party.

If you live in the Bay Area, come join us at 8 on the evening of Saturday, June 30, at the Zellerbach auditorium on the Berkeley campus, where Gore Vidal will hold forth on "The State of the Union," joined by Molly Ivins, Barbara Ehrenreich, Larry Bensky, Eva Jefferson Paterson, recording artists Altazor and many other friends of the magazine. The bash is presented by a group of Bay Area independent bookstores, Pacifica Radio and the *Express*, coordinated by Nation Associate Bob Baldock in cooperation with the University of California Graduate School of Journalism. The proceeds will benefit *The Nation* and KPFA, the local Pacifica station.

Actually, the party began a few weeks ago in Austin, Texas, at the fifty-second annual convention of The National Lawyers Guild. They hosted a *Nation* evening, complete with a birthday cake donated by a local bakery, music by Homesick for Heaven, a local three-woman band, and speeches by *Nation* foreign editor George Black (serious and witty) and contributing editor Molly Ivins (hard-hitting

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and hilarious). The festivities will continue through the year, culminating in a big celebration in New York City in late fall—proceeds to the *Nation* intern program. Events currently planned include an appearance by editor Victor Navasky in Des Moines, Iowa, on September 8 at Prasong (Pak) Nurack's Thai restaurant, A Taste of Thailand, which already features an outdoor billboard saying, READ THE NATION, CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF PROGRESSIVE JOURNALISM. Later this year literary editor Elsa Dixler will speak on "Feminism and the Left: *The Nation*, a Case Study," in Northampton, Massachusetts, at an event put together by Philip Green, a member of *The Nation*'s editorial board and professor of government at Smith College. Executive editor Richard Lingeman, a native Hoosier, has been summoned by a group of Nation Associates in South Bend, Indiana. This fall art critic Arthur Danto will chair a symposium on art and politics at Columbia University on the eve of an exhibition of the work of *Nation* artists ranging from Edward Sorel and Ed Koren back to the late Ben Shahn and William Gropper. Indeed, our staff, writers and friends plan to visit cities and towns throughout the country—from Boston to Washington, from Honolulu to Picabo, Idaho, all on behalf of *The Nation*. If you want them to come to your town, let us know.

Why are we celebrating the anniversary of a magazine that is, after all, only one among the 11,556 magazines currently published in the United States? Some might say that sheer survival for 125 years is sufficient pretext for a blowout. *The Nation* is America's oldest continuously published weekly magazine. But survival by itself—although a real tribute to our predecessors—is not necessarily worth commemorating. There must also be a raison d'être. Today many magazines go under that never should have been started in the first place. The current issue of *Folio*, which bills itself as "The Magazine for Magazine Management," cites three house-plant magazines that failed at more or less the same time—*Houseplants and Porch Gardens*, *Plants Alive* and *Popular Gardening Indoors*. Magazine consultant James Kobak explains, "There are only two things you do with plants, water them and talk to them. What else is there to say after that?" His observation is a reminder that a magazine without a purpose is like, well, a geranium without a pot.

Well-wishers often urge us at *The Nation* to increase our readership by ceasing to offend the powers that be. But the narrowness of such a prescription will be demonstrated in November, when Thunder's Mouth Press publishes a *Nation* anthology edited by Katrina vanden Heuvel. The selections, from authors as diverse as Heywood Broun, James Baldwin and Katha Pollitt, show that while the magazine has been nobody's house organ, followed no party line, some of its most enduring articles have been its most radical ones.

To many on the left, a magazine like *The Nation* is a cause, an occasion for rallying the frequently dissenting troops, an instrument for organizing. Someone once called *The Nation* a magazine for the permanent minority. At first blush, that does not sound like much of a compliment. Causes, if they are worthy and just, ought to prevail, and magazines, like people, prefer to believe that they are on the winning side of history. But a magazine for the permanent minority is an honorable undertaking—especially when so many in that minority are ahead of their time.

Movements, like those for peace and human rights in Eastern Europe, will and should come to power—not magazines like *The Nation*. But we can nourish, prod, hector, educate, lobby, cajole, wheedle, expose, embarrass, inform, illuminate, alert and occasionally even inspire. That's not bad for a week's work.

Those associated with journals of opinion have long argued that the way to judge the influence of such journals is not by the quantity of circulation but by its quality. One of the reasons we are inviting readers to invite us to celebrate our 125th year with them and their friends is to expand the *Nation* community, to enroll new subscribers and to do so by enlisting friends of friends. Carey McWilliams, editor of *The Nation* from 1955 to 1975, once observed, "It is always a question of finding that reader for whom a publication like *The Nation* is a lantern in the dark. Once he learns of *The Nation* he is a likely reader for life."

COMING UP

Special Issue:
The American Neo-Nazi Movement Today
By Elinor Langer

Note: Another *Nation* special issue, "The Lords of the Global Village," by Ben H. Bagdikian (June 12, 1989) was honored by Project Censored, a media research project sponsored by Sonoma State University in California. Bagdikian's study of media monopolies was designated the most underreported story of 1989 by a panel of experts, who compiled an honor roll of ten articles on subjects neglected by the press.

The Art Cops

For all the fears of censorship aroused by the National Endowment for the Arts controversy, the gags some writers wore in a Manhattan protest a few months ago were strictly symbolic. But on April 25 the art police did descend on San Francisco photographer Jock Sturges. That day Sturges—whose figure studies hang in the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, among others, and whose work has appeared in *Harper's*, *Vogue* and *Mothering*—answered a knock on his door. It was a joint F.B.I.-San Francisco Police Department strike force. They had no search warrant, but they refused to leave. When the warrant arrived several hours later, they swept through his apartment and studio, confiscating 100,000 negatives, his personal computer and fifteen years of business records. They took his enlarger, his passport and many personal belongings.

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The crime: An associate of Sturges had handed over twenty-seven sheets of "internegative" film, made from color transparencies, to a San Francisco lab for processing. According to Sturges, the film consists of informal, candid shots of friends—adults and children—that Sturges took on a "clothing optional" beach in France. Sturges, a self-described naturist who photographs nudes only in appropriate contexts, was using the film to practice his color printing techniques and prepare gifts for his friends. Someone at Newell Colour Labs, in an attempt to comply with a sweeping federal child pornography law, called the cops.

The raid shut down Sturges as both a commercial photographer and artist. Although no charges have yet been filed, his equipment, records and contacts remain in the hands of the F.B.I. Working their way through his address book, agents have startled and sometimes humiliated numerous friends of Sturges, calling to ask if they or their children have ever been involved with Sturges in an "unclothed" photo session and to get them to supply information on Sturges's "sexual proclivities." His largest and most long-standing commercial client, the Marin Ballet, abruptly canceled Sturges's contract to photograph its children's dance class, which he had done for more than six years.

Joe Semien, a self-employed technician working with Sturges, suffered worse treatment. A graduate of the San Francisco Academy of Art College, Semien had delivered Sturges's film to Newell labs. Before raiding Sturges's studio, the police harassed Semien's employees, who also did work for Sturges, threatening prosecution unless they identified Sturges. Then they hammered on the door to Semien's apartment, dragged him out of bed naked, interrogated him and hauled him off to jail because he asked to call his lawyer. During two days of interrogation he refused to reveal the name of the photographer whose film he had dropped off. Finally a judge ordered him released on his own recognizance, even though a district attorney had asked for $81,000 bond on an assortment of charges.

Sturges and Semien were victims of a federal prosecutor's rabid interpretation of obscenity laws and in particular of the Child Protection Act, a legacy of Edwin Meese's Department of Justice. That law requires anyone—a person or a processing lab—possessing photos of children showing "frontal nudity" to keep on file a model release and complete records of the photo's use.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Rodolfo Orjales is the prosecutor on the Sturges case. He is also coordinator of a Bay Area child pornography task force. He's handled obscenity and child pornography cases before, but the Sturges case, he admits, "is rather unique" because of Sturges's professional standing. Under the various obscenity and child exploitation statutes involved, he said, Sturges will be required to do hard time if convicted: "Under a best-case scenario, he's going to end up with twelve months minimum."

When it comes to what is presumed to be child pornography, said Orjales, "the First Amendment doesn't apply." In particular, he cited a recent decision by the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in *United States v. Arvin*. The case, according to Orjales, involved photos of young children sent to an undercover police officer. The court set down a series of "objective" criteria to define obscene photos involving children: "the apparent age of the child, whether the photo focuses on the genitals, whether the child is in an unnatural position." The court also ruled, Orjales explained, that expert testimony on artistic merit is not relevant or admissible: "Your gut tells you and you go with that. That is what the court said. Your gut tells you whether something is art or exploitation." The case is unique only because "this guy is claiming to be a professional photographer, somewhat recognized with galleries and such. But the only thing that makes it different is he knows how to take pictures. The guy is saying we're infringing on his artistic activity. That's b.s."

Sturges's attorney, Michael Metzger, told me he showed Orjales and an F.B.I. agent prints of his client's acclaimed photos in an attempt to convince them of his artistic seriousness. "Orjales looks at one that hangs in a gallery in Chicago and says, 'That's prosecutable,'" Metzger said. Orjales didn't deny the comment outright, saying, "I will not admit that took place." Then he added that "for whatever it's worth," his "gut" does not sound off at Sturges's "gallery stuff."

In the San Francisco art community, the Sturges case has rapidly become a cause célèbre. Some photographers have talked of boycotting Newell labs in retaliation, a step Sturges has gone on the radio to oppose. "The labs are put in a difficult position by the law," he told me. "There are forty-five people who work there who had nothing to do with this, and I don't want them hurt." A member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors plans to introduce a resolution condemning the raid on June 25. After initially shying away from publicity—"I wanted to give the government every opportunity to save face"—Sturges is now telling the news media that while he was injured by the allegation that he is an exploiter of children, "this is not really about my

(*Continued On Page 57*)

★

TRUMP BUMP

His real estate is in a slump
And wifey's proving hard to dump
And everyone he called a chump
Would like to see him on his rump.
The banks march in (galump, galump)
To tell him when and where to jump.
So sympathize with Donald Trump.
Don't listen for that final thump.
Allow into your throat a lump.
His bubble's limp. He broke his pump.

Calvin Trillin

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

The catastrophe that has overtaken the thrift industry offers a unique opportunity for the study of institutional corruption and decay. The Office of Thrift Supervision is barely able to log the collapse, let alone do anything to arrest it. The Justice Department says it has run out of investigators and prosecutors to pursue the malefactors of great wealth. The F.B.I. likewise admits that it has too few agents for the job. The Treasury Department passively revises its deficit estimates in a skyward direction—once every month this year. Congress, with almost no exceptions, is implicated in the affair, refusing to discipline its senior members for the acceptance of bribes and, at the investigative level, maintaining a leisurely, lenient pace. Most of the press forwards the general assumption—one the Administration ardently wishes us to share—that the whole thing is nobody's fault.

It does seem, however, that one of the nation's institutions has been taking a more than passing interest in the savings and loan industry. In an outstanding series of articles, Pete Brewton of *The Houston Post* has drawn a complex and suggestive diagram of the influence of the Central Intelligence Agency in the debacle. (Brewton also unearthed the details of the amazing soft-loan arrangements that George Bush's son Neil negotiated for himself from Silverado S&L, an outfit from whose board he resigned only days after his daddy got the Republican presidential nomination.)

If the C.I.A. is implicated, can organized crime be far behind? Mobsters of all stripes show up in Brewton's researches. Often the connection between these two foreign-policy instruments is, as it has been since the early days of the anti-Castro schemes, an economic partnership involving the exploitation of drugs and guns for counterrevolution. The same names recur, as so often. One that has been cited repeatedly in the *Post* is that of Herman Beebe, who is carefully described as a "Louisiana organized crime associate." Beebe's name turns up in several of the more spectacular Texas savings and loan crashes, including Vernon Savings in Dallas, State Savings of Lubbock and Continental Savings in Houston. He served ten months in a federal prison after pleading guilty to fraud in connection with a loan at State Savings. In the early 1970s his footprints were found in an arms-smuggling racket involving ultraright Cubans in Mexico and the Gambino crime family in New York.

In a highly illuminating article published on June 10, Brewton traced the operations of the Palmer National Bank, a Washington institution set up with seed money from Beebe and run by two of George Bush's political associates. The two, Stefan Halper and Harvey McLean Jr., met while working on Bush's 1980 presidential campaign. Halper was policy director and McLean a fundraiser. When Bush shelved his presidential ambitions to become history's meekest understudy, Halper joined the Reagan-Bush staff.

I have been interested in Halper ever since *The New York Times* reported, in 1983, that he served the Reagan-Bush campaign as one of William Casey's agents on the "October surprise" committee. This group sought to monitor Jimmy Carter's efforts to release the American hostages held in Teheran. Its "intelligence gathering" seems to have been a little overenthusiastic, and led to the theft of Carter's briefing book and the "Debategate" flap. Later evidence suggests that Casey helped make a private deal with Khomeini to deny Carter the prize of a hostage release. This ultimately led to a new subdivision of the black economy of covert action, in which Iran was repaid by arms that in their turn yielded profits to the *contra* network. As an unnamed source in the Reagan campaign told the *Times*, retired and serving C.I.A. officers were useful to Casey in his 1980 chivying of Carter: "There was some C.I.A. stuff coming from Halper, and some agency guys were hired."

After the 1980 triumph, Halper was rewarded with a job as military and political specialist at the State Department. This afforded him the spare time to renew contact with Bush money-man McLean, and to raise a $2.8 million loan from Beebe to begin the Palmer National Bank. By the mid-1980s Palmer National was attracting quite a nice class of customer. It held the account of the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty, a front organization for Oliver North directed by John Bircher and general nuisance Carl (Spitz) Channell. Channell later got two years' probation after being convicted of using his group to help North fund the *contras* behind the back of Congress. Through Palmer, Channell transferred almost $650,000 to North's Swiss bank account. In the last entry of North's surviving notebooks, for November 25, 1986, there is a touching note that reads "Legal Defense Fund." Under it is the name Stefan Halper. Halper told Brewton that he had helped set up the fund. (As the onetime son-in-law of Ray Cline, former deputy director for intelligence at the C.I.A. and himself a habitué of the paranoid right-wing milieu, Halper seems well placed to keep turning up.)

McLean went on to own an S&L in Paris, Texas (nice touch), which failed in 1988 and was merged with eleven other deadbeat thrifts at a cost to the federal government and the rest of us of $1.3 billion. Last year he was placed in involuntary bankruptcy by federal receivers for a slew of defaulted loans.

This micro-example of what might be called the S&L culture is enough to suggest that more is involved than just a management crisis. If Congress is going to pursue any kind of investigation, it must find the nerve to inquire about the C.I.A. role in money laundering; about the possibility that the whole fraud was protected and protracted by its "friends in high places." A good starting point would be right at the top. Bush, who affects such languor and fatalism about the bailout, is implicated in its shady aspects through his business and political friends, through his son, through his home state and his former agency, to say nothing of his ethos of deregulation. Who will ask the first tough question? Whoever it is will be much in Pete Brewton's debt, as we all are.

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WATCHING RIGHTS.

ARYEH NEIER

On the eve of Nelson Mandela's visit to the United States, Cox newspapers published a story saying that the C.I.A. had fingered Mandela for arrest in 1962. This revelation of the agency's activities in the 1960s was certainly dramatic, as was another disclosure, about three weeks earlier, which has received far less sustained attention but which ought to cause even greater outrage. That was Kathy Kadane's story for States News Service on the part played by C.I.A. and State Department officials in the 1965-66 bloodbath in Indonesia. In her meticulously documented account (published first by the *Herald-Journal* in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and subsequently by such papers as *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe* and *The Miami Herald*) Kadane reported that U.S. officials in Jakarta furnished the names of about 5,000 Communist activists to the Indonesian Army and then checked off the names as the army reported that the individuals had been killed or captured. "They probably killed a lot of people, and I probably have a lot of blood on my hands," Robert Martens, who had spent two years compiling the lists in the U.S. Embassy, told Kadane. "But that's not all bad. There's a time when you have to strike hard at a decisive moment."

By the lowest estimate, 250,000 Communists and suspected supporters were murdered in Indonesia a quarter of a century ago following what has usually—and contentiously—been described as "an abortive coup." More commonly, it is estimated that 500,000 were killed. More than a million others were arrested and detained, many until the late 1970s, when pressure from the Carter Administration helped to secure their release. Few of them had been tried or even charged.

Although Kadane's revelations about Indonesia are fresh, we have known for a long time about similar activities carried out by the C.I.A. and the State Department in other countries in the 1960s. The Phoenix Program in Vietnam was intended to "neutralize" 20,000 Vietcong. It apparently succeeded in its numerical goal, though whether most of its victims were Vietcong is doubtful. Less well known is the role of the C.I.A. and other U.S. agencies in establishing what were known as "counter-terror" programs in El Salvador and Guatemala in the early and mid-1960s. Those involved thousands of assassinations and played a large part in fueling the bloody conflicts that persist today. (On the subject of those two countries, Michael McClintock's two-volume *The American Connection*, published in 1985 by Zed Books, is probably still the best history of the evolution of their systems of state terror.) The Indonesian model also inspired emulation. My colleague Juan Mendez of Americas Watch recalls visiting Santiago, Chile, in 1972 and seeing graffiti proclaiming "Jakarta va!"—Jakarta is coming. A year later, with General Pinochet's coup, it had arrived.

Some of those associated with the Congressional committees responsible for "oversight" of the C.I.A. are now saying that what happened in Indonesia is ancient history; that there is no need, at this late date, to stir up trouble. Yet just as citizens of what used to be called the Eastern bloc are demanding to fill in the blank pages in their histories, so it is high time that Americans (and Indonesians) discover how one of the bloodiest chapters in the postwar era was written, and who was responsible.

What's more, many Indonesians still suffer direct consequences of the events of 1965-66. About fifty individuals imprisoned at the time remain incarcerated today. Indeed, four were executed on February 15, after twenty-four years in prison—surely a record. Four of the prisoners held since the 1960s were executed in 1985, another nine in 1986 and one in 1987. Six more, now middle-aged or elderly men, still face execution.

Aside from those in prison, hundreds of thousands of former prisoners—known as "ex-Tapols," or E.T.s, according to the identity cards they must carry—are restricted in various ways, limited as to where they may live and work. At least once a month they must report to their district military command headquarters. Indonesia's best-known writer, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who was imprisoned from 1965 to 1979, may not leave Jakarta, and his books are banned in Indonesia. (William Morrow has just published his early novel *The Fugitive* in a fine new translation, marking the first time one of his books has appeared in the United States.)

The restrictions extend beyond the ex-Tapols themselves, as their families and extended families are also restricted. A new Asia Watch report on Indonesia, *Injustice, Persecution, Eviction*, reproduces a September 1988 government document that explains the "mental ideological screening" that the government conducts to make certain that anyone with Communist ties is excluded from employment with the military, the civil service, the schools, political parties, the press, legal aid societies, even the priesthood and shadow-puppet troupes. The document asserts that for the military, the Indonesian government "holds absolutely that the family of the individual involved, including his parents, in-laws, grandparents, uncles, wife, and environment must be untainted"; as for civil servants, the document says that "the screening process on the family environment is the same, except it focuses more on the character of the individual himself and how far ingrained is the ideology to uphold Pancasila [Indonesia's state ideology] and the 1945 Constitution as well as his loyalty to the government and the state."

In 1975, responding to disclosures in the wake of Watergate about wrongdoing by the C.I.A. and the other "intelligence" agencies, the U.S. Senate established the Church committee, whose fifteen-month inquiry resulted in a notable series of reports dealing with such matters as the role of the C.I.A. in assassination plots against foreign leaders. Now that Kathy Kadane's research has been published, it is plain that there was a lot of ground that the Church committee did not cover. It is time for another look. Indeed, now that everyone has pronounced the end of the cold war, one wonders what arguments will be given to justify keeping the agency's secrets.

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ARTICLES.

JUSTICE WATCH

A Civil Rights Bill for Workers

DIANA R. GORDON

With forty-seven sponsors in the Senate, including seven Republicans, and an apparently solid majority of House supporters, the Civil Rights Act of 1990 now seems likely to clear the House Judiciary Committee easily and survive floor fights during the summer. The threat of a presidential veto of this employment-discrimination bill has not dimmed the optimism of most civil rights leaders. "I think the bill will be passed by Congress and approved by the President," says Julius Chambers, director of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Propelled by the symbolic power of a crusade to stamp out bigotry, the legislation has encountered relatively smooth sailing thus far. But parts of it are hard for American business and its champions in Congress and in the Bush league to swallow; it is still too early to tell what kind of pressure they might apply as the Congressional session comes to a close. As Earl Weaver might have noted, the fat lady hasn't sung yet; she's only warming up in the wings.

The bill is generally touted by its proponents as remedial, repairing the damage done to equality in employment by a handful of Supreme Court cases decided last year. "The United States, the world's leader in civil rights, cannot regress at home," says American Bar Association president-elect John Curtin Jr. "The Civil Rights Act of 1990 preserves victories won long ago" and will "shore up the foundation of civil rights in our country." Most of those 1989 decisions made it more difficult for minorities and women to get legal redress for bias in hiring and promotion or for harassment in the workplace. One case allowed white male workers claiming reverse discrimination to file suit long after court-approved settlements of bias claims had been entered into, even though the workers had not availed themselves of the opportunity for such a challenge at the time of the settlement. While the business community and conservatives hailed the Court's trend as a welcome change from social activism on the bench or downplayed it as "fine-tuning" that continues to protect equal opportunity (the characterization of Utah Senator Orrin Hatch), civil rights groups saw it as a disastrous setback, what N.A.A.C.P. executive director Benjamin Hooks called the "legal lynching of black America's hope."

The law that would restore that hope touches many bases. It would amend Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by providing a jury trial for plaintiffs claiming racial or sexual discrimination or harassment, as well as money damages for successful complainants (and punitive damages in cases of malicious abuse). It would effectively reinstate *Griggs v. Duke Power*, a unanimous 1971 Supreme Court decision that imposed on employers the burden of showing why a personnel practice that has the effect—whether intended or not—of excluding minorities or women is "required by business necessity." The new law would invalidate seniority systems adopted with intent to discriminate and employment practices adopted with mixed motives which include bias. To the federal statute that bars discrimination in making and enforcing private contracts, it would add a prohibition against discriminatory conduct that occurs during the period when the agreement is in force. Finally, the bill sets forth provisions for the finality of court settlements in discrimination suits, disallowing challenges by people who could have made a timely protest but didn't.

A parade of witnesses at House and Senate hearings in February presented a disheartening picture of an American workplace rife with racial and gender-based tension and bias. Representatives of such groups as the American Way Legal Defense Fund and the National Women's Law Center summoned up case after case of demeaning assignments and demotions based on race, racist and sexist epithets hurled at defenseless employees, contracts terminated because of religious bigotry, and skills tests and educational requirements upgraded just as women and minorities began to apply for jobs. In most of those cases the Supreme Court decisions of 1989 had thwarted legal redress.

In arguing that justice had been denied, the witnesses had a model in *Patterson v. McLean Credit Union*, the most widely publicized of last year's Supreme Court rulings on civil rights. In that case the plaintiff, a black credit-union teller and file coordinator, had been repeatedly passed over for promotion and training opportunities offered to whites and had been subjected to racial slurs; she testified that the head of her company had told her several times that "blacks are known to work slower than whites" by nature. She had been denied recovery on the ground that the federal statute that covers private contracts did not protect her against acts of bias that occurred after the contract was entered into and that didn't interfere with its performance.

Opponents of the bill have rarely addressed the human impact of the Supreme Court's retreat on civil rights. Instead they have groused about costs and railed against quotas. Business representatives know as well as anyone else that equality doesn't come cheap. They decry the added inconvenience and cost of defending lawsuits that might be directed against them if the bill passes; one witness submitted to the House Labor and Education Committee a table purporting to show that the costs of litigation under Title VII—attorneys' fees, settlements and monetary awards—would jump from $775 million to $2 billion. A lawyer for the National Association of Manufacturers reminded the Representatives that the

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bill would impose "crushing costs" on public-sector employers, saddling the taxpayers with "protracted litigation in a federal system which is already overburdened."

The most common target, however, is the section of the bill that deals with lawsuits attacking employment practices that are, as the Supreme Court said in *Griggs*, "fair in form but discriminatory in operation." *Griggs* bit the dust with last year's decision in *Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Atonio*, which forces plaintiffs to prove a negative: that the employer has no business justification for a discriminatory practice. Now that the Civil Rights Act proposes to shift the burden of proof back to the employer, those opposed to the bill are quota rattling. "This provision threatens great harm," said Charles Fried, Solicitor General under President Reagan and now a professor of jurisprudence at Harvard Law School, in Senate testimony in February. "It would force employers to use quotas in hiring or else expose themselves to lawsuits they cannot win." The argument here is that employers faced with charges of bias because of a discrepancy between the demographics of the local labor market and the corporate work force are so lacking in imagination that they will be unable to think of anything to do but hire unqualified minorities and women.

The quota issue is also the sticking point for the Bush Administration. In a letter to Senator Edward Kennedy written the day before the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources markup, Attorney General Dick Thornburgh expressed concern that the legislation "would encourage quota systems" and warned, "If S. 2104 were presented to the President in its current form, I and other senior advisers would recommend that it be vetoed." The veto threat has not been repeated, and President Bush has made it difficult for observers to read his lips, telling reporters on May 17, "I want to sign a civil rights bill, but I will not sign a quota bill." At a meeting with civil rights groups a few days earlier he was similarly noncommittal, making only general and platitudinous reassurances and allowing chief of staff John Sununu (undoubtedly one of the most important of the "senior advisers" referred to in Thornburgh's letter) to warn of "ghosts" in the legislation—presumably the specter of quotas—that would have to be banished before the Administration gives its blessing.

The Bush people may be in a real jam on this one. If they go along with the legislation they are open to the charge from business groups and conservatives that they are agreeing to quotas. To oppose it would seem politically dangerous in an election year, especially when the civil rights community has made clear that Bush's reputation with blacks may stand or fall on his support of or opposition to the bill. Kennedy has now brought along several new supporters, including two Republicans, by agreeing to modify the definition of the business necessity that employers must prove in defending an employment practice that results in the exclusion of minorities and women. The new language allows employers to justify an employment test or educational requirement that has a discriminatory effect if it can be shown that it "bears a substantial and demonstrable relationship to effective job performance." This is nearly identical with the *Griggs* standard (there the permissible practice had to have a "manifest relationship to the employment") that prevailed for nineteen years, and it is less onerous than the standard originally written into the bill—that a discriminatory practice is defensible only if it is "essential to job performance." If the Bush Administration can't agree to the new formulation, it is rejecting the message of the old law: that employers mustn't screen out, even unintentionally, minorities and women without a very good reason. Surely this is a message that most American voters, if they knew they had the choice of accepting or rejecting it, would endorse.

But the contest over the Civil Rights Act is not about providing voters with that kind of information. The opposition is playing bogyman politics, throwing up a symbolic smokescreen to protect what one Senate witness candidly referred to as the "national ideology" of an employer's right to hire and fire at will. The bill's critics bemoan the loss of the "merit system" in employment policy, but they have not presented a single piece of evidence that competence in job performance was threatened or that quotas were in fact

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KAREN CALDICOTT

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adopted when companies were doing business under the *Griggs* standard. When public visibility is low, opponents of the legislation may abandon recourse to the buzzwords and simply make bizarre proposals to protect bosses' right to hire workers they are comfortable with. One of the twelve amendments that Hatch brought with him when he came to the Senate committee markup was a masterfully circular proposal essentially allowing anyone to sue at any time to throw out a court-approved affirmative action plan as long as the allegation charged a violation of equal protection. (What else would the plaintiff charge?)

Throughout the legislative process conservatives have been saying that this bill is not intended merely to correct a few Supreme Court errors but that it goes beyond preserving the pre-1989 status quo in employment discrimination law. They have a point. The law synthesizes the pre-1989 judge-made rules into a thoroughgoing legislative commitment to end employment bias and to enlist employers in achieving equality in the job market, not just demographic balance in individual workplaces. Its larger aims surface in its use of the word "eliminate" when describing what federal civil rights laws are supposed to do about discrimination, and in its stipulation that all such laws "shall be broadly construed." While affirmative action is not directly addressed by the bill, its spirit is still at issue—not the legitimacy of formal plans with goals and timetables for achieving racial and gender representation but the informal extra mile employers must go to conform hiring standards to the likely backgrounds of the minorities and women who will be coming to them for jobs. Employers will also have to recruit more imaginatively and aggressively. Most important, in order to insure that educational and training requirements for workers don't shut out minorities and women, they may have to do the training themselves and support general and vocational education that prepares a broader range of people for the jobs of the twenty-first century.

One of the troubling aspects of affirmative action has been that it often pits poor African-Americans and Latinos against working-class whites, whose choices in jobs and education are also very limited. Anything that contributes to better job preparation in the larger society will benefit whites and males as well as racial minorities and women. A continuing tension is the competition between the needy and the less needy for scarce resources, including jobs. The Civil Rights Act of 1990, contrary to the charge that it will rigidify the labor market, has the potential for stimulating some universal entitlements. □

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ASTA

UNDER BASHIR'S BOOT

Color Sudan 'Islamic' Green

STEPHEN HUBBELL

Khartoum, Sudan

Standing in the crowded lobby of the Meridien Hotel in downtown Khartoum, the tall man, a Dinka from the Abyei region of Sudan and a human rights activist, is getting nervous. "It is *not* convenient!" he whispers curtly when I ask him for information concerning a recent massacre of villagers in the Nuba Mountains, some 350 miles south of here. At the mention of the incident, he glances around and warily surveys the other occupants of the lobby. I propose a walk together up el-Qasr Avenue, empty at this late hour, away from the city center and the watchful gaze of the omnipresent secret police. He doesn't answer, but from the look in his eyes I can tell it wouldn't be a good idea.

Just two days earlier, in the safety of his office in a remote suburb, he had himself suggested this meeting without apparent trepidation; but in the intervening period, something—a phone call from the police, perhaps, or a rejected application for an exit visa—has set him on edge. A week after our abortive interview, he was detained by security police. Since that time, in mid-March, he has not been heard from or seen.

Military regimes come and go in Sudan with numbing regularity, but the present junta, led by Lieut. Gen. Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir, who overthrew an elected government on June 30, 1989, is setting new standards of brutality and depravity. Within days of the coup Bashir outlawed every political party, trade union, civic organization and professional syndicate; detained thousands of activists; and began purging the civil service of secularists, leftists, southerners and women. In describing the current regime, human rights groups reach for superlatives. A report published in March by Africa Watch calls Sudan a "human rights disaster," "exceptionally cruel and intolerant," and "indiscriminately brutal." The secretary general of the Cairo-based Arab Organization for Human Rights blames Bashir for "massive violations of human rights" and terms the situation in Sudan "horrible" [see Aryeh Neier, "Watching Rights," June 18].

Having destroyed political life in one stroke—no small

Stephen Hubbell, a reporter based in Cairo, has written for the Financial Times, The Independent *and* Middle East International.

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'I am not page-twelve material.'

—June Jordan in The Progressive

'I am looking for an umbrella big enough to overcome the tactical and moral limitations of "identity politics"—politics based on gender, class, or race. I am searching for the new language of a new political consciousness of identity.'

—June Jordan, "Waiting for a Taxi,"

'I do not believe that we can restore and expand the freedoms that our lives require unless and until we embrace the justice of our rage. If we do not reintroduce a Right and a Wrong, a Good or Evil measurement of doers and deeds, then how shall we, finally, argue our case?'

—June Jordan, "Where Is the Rage?,"

'I am crying because I am overwhelmed by victory: The cost is not forgivable. Tears come from someplace uncontrollable and free, and right around now anything uncontrollable and everything free looks and feels pretty good to me. I am crying because last week two white men accosted me, calling me "Bitch!" and calling me "Nigger!" and last week Mr. Nelson Mandela was still locked away, a prisoner of racist white men, and I was not sure about the swift and certain demise of apartheid but this morning I am sure. It's over.'

—June Jordan, "Mandela and the Kingdom Come,"

'I am not a "divisive issue." I am not page-twelve material. I want the liberty and the hallowed full human rights of every woman in the world at the top of the news, right there, mixed up with the East Berliners rushing to embrace the people of West Berlin. And I want this new decade to forswear all double standards. No more of this one standard for white people and then there's Panama. No more "establishment of democracy" courtesy of the U.S. Army. No more official regret for the death toll of "American lives." No more "unknown numbers" of "unidentified" and officially ignored victims of white power. I demand the names of every Panamanian man and woman and child who died because George Bush could not have a merry Christmas unless he tried to eliminate Manuel Noriega!'

—June Jordan, "Wrong or White,"

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A5NNDD

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achievement in a country that prides itself on the vitality of its democratic institutions—Bashir set about recasting Sudanese society in the mold of Iranian Islamic fundamentalism. He joined forces with the radical National Islamic Front (N.I.F.), led by Dr. Hassan al-Turabi, whom most observers credit with having engineered last year's coup as well as the political make-over that followed. The Sudanese quickly came to realize that this regime would differ from previous periods of autocratic rule. "Under other military regimes there were syndicates and unions and parties," said one dissident. "There used to be a balance. For the first time, they have upset the balance."

The coup was initially greeted with relief in the West and in much of the Arab world. Impatient with the dithering, corrupt and ineffective administration of Prime Minister Sadiq el-Mahdi, outsiders hoped the new regime would move to end the protracted war with the Sudan People's Liberation Army (S.P.L.A.) and suspend controversial Islamic laws (Shariah) imposed in 1983 by then-President Mohammed Jaafar el-Nimeiry.

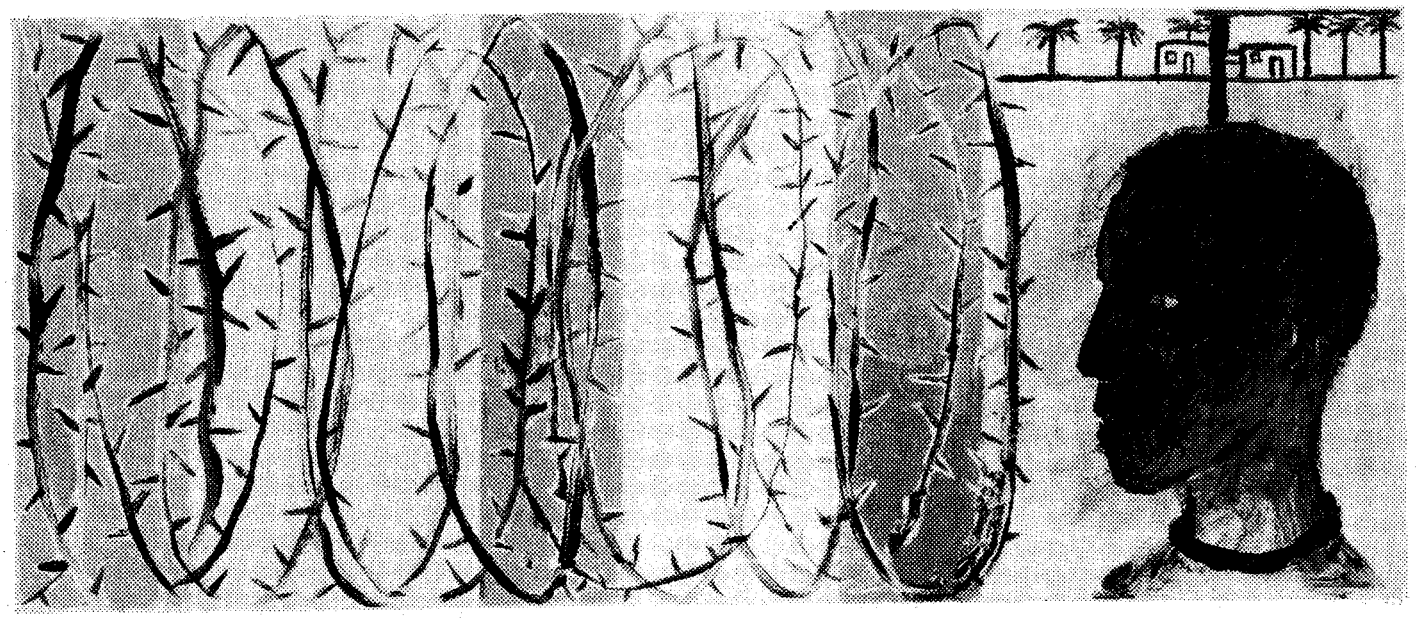
During the months since the coup, these hopes have been dashed, though Sudanese opponents of the government assert that the true character of Bashir's rule was obvious from the beginning. "The N.I.F. has always been the real power behind Bashir," one journalist, now in prison, remarked, "and he will serve only as long as he does what they demand." The N.I.F. was particularly displeased with Sadiq's plans to meet S.P.L.A. leader John Garang last July 4 and with a proposed constitutional convention to suspend Shariah scheduled for September 1989. The coup was a pre-emptive strike.

To appease his patrons Bashir has appointed Islamic militants to senior positions throughout the government and fired the editors of all major newspapers and magazines to make way for N.I.F. loyalists. The ruling Revolutionary Command Council (R.C.C.) ordered shops to close down during afternoon prayers on Friday and increased penalties for the production and sale of bootleg *araji*, a date-based liquor that is a major source of income for displaced southerners. In addition, male passengers who refuse to relinquish their seats to women in the front rows of the open-sided "box" buses that ply Khartoum's streets face arrest and are frequently flogged.

Last winter, Khartoumis got a taste of just how broad the junta's power had become. In a typically arbitrary and impulsive gesture, the R.C.C. told shopkeepers in Khartoum and Omdurman to paint their storefronts a particular shade of bright green—"Islamic" green, it turns out—as part of a religiously inspired beautification project. Recalcitrant merchants—the city is, after all, starved of essential commodities, including paint—were threatened with arrest and imprisonment.

This episode epitomizes Bashir's efforts to impose a single hue on the multiracial and multiethnic society he governs. Sudan exists as a unified entity in name only, and perhaps in the imaginations of a few government officials; it is, in fact, one of the world's most culturally diverse countries, with more than 300 ethnic groups speaking at least 100 languages and scattered over an area the size of Western Europe. When Egypt defeated the "Black Sultans" of the Funj empire in 1820 and molded it, implausibly, into a nation extending from the Nile's second cataract in the north to the savanna of equatorial Africa in the south, it set in motion a cycle of insurgency and counterinsurgency that continued until independence in 1956 and beyond. "Sudan is an Arab country, an African country, a Muslim country," observed Mansour Khalid, the S.P.L.A.'s leading northern supporter and a former Foreign Minister, "but it is not an Arab country like Syria, an African country like Uganda or a Muslim country like Saudi Arabia. We are a special case." Sudan's unique character, however, does not make for ethnic harmony.

Today Sudan is the staging ground for a dizzyingly complex jumble of armed conflicts pitting, variously, the governments of Chad, Libya, Uganda and Ethiopia against an assortment of rebel groups, while Arab, Christian and animist militias battle throughout the south and west. The civilian death toll since 1986, from war and famine, is reliably estimated at more than 500,000. Most foreign



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observers speak, misleadingly, of one civil war—the seven-year struggle between the S.P.L.A. and the Khartoum government—and divide the country into the "Arab" north and the "Christian" south. The reality is far more complex. In the enormous western province of Darfur, for example, the military has intervened to fan a conflict, now in its third year, between the Fur and Mahariya tribes, who had co-existed fairly peacefully for centuries. Sudan, having recently agreed to a timetable for unification with Libya, had been content to allow Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi's proxies to fight the Fur, who oppose an extension of Libyan influence in the province. According to relief workers stationed in Darfur, the Sudanese military has lately been playing a direct role in combating the Fur. Killings of Fur tribespeople by the army and allied militias are on the increase.

Post-independence efforts to govern Sudan have foundered on the impossibility of creating a sense of statehood and national loyalty among such a polyglot population. Realizing this, successive governments have had to appeal to several constituencies at once, among them the two leading Arab sects, the Ansar and Khatmiya; non-Arabs living in the south; the trade unions; the Communists; businessmen; and various configurations of tribal groups by carefully parceling out Cabinet positions and other political favors. When the fragile social contract crumbles, as it did in 1985 after Nimeiry tried to impose Shariah over the entire country and extend government control over southern oilfields, the government is destined to fall. Bashir, in contrast to his predecessors, has chosen to avoid the perils of coalition politics altogether. He and his allies seek to retake the south militarily, or, failing that, they hope it will secede, leaving an overwhelming Muslim majority in the north and giving the R.C.C. a free hand to implement Shariah. The S.P.L.A., for its part, favors a unified Sudan and a secular government in Khartoum.

At first sight, Khartoum hardly seems like the capital of a country at civil war. There are no military transports rumbling through the dusty streets, no supply planes groaning overhead. The onset of curfew at 11 P.M. passes more or less without notice from the city's half-million residents, most of whom abandon the downtown commercial district at dusk for the safety of their homes. The many civil wars remain remote, conducted at a discreet distance. Khartoum is, after all, as far from Juba, the southern provincial capital under siege by the S.P.L.A., as London is from Budapest.

But now, for the first time, Bashir is bringing the war home to Khartoum. Increasingly, the government is relying on shadowy extragovernmental gangs to maintain order and preserve religious orthodoxy in the capital city. What has emerged from Bashir's macabre *perestroika* is a parallel government answerable only to the N.I.F. When Farouk Mohammed Ibrahim el-Nour, a professor at the University of Khartoum, was seized by security police late last year, colleagues and family members hoped he would resurface at Khartoum's Kober Prison, where most political detainees end up. Grim though it may be, Kober is far preferable to the secret detention centers, known as "ghost houses," where

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accountability and basic standards of prisoner treatment are nonexistent. Ibrahim was taken to a particularly notorious ghost house on the outskirts of Khartoum, where he was held for twelve days, during which he was severely beaten. His crime? Teaching the theory of evolution to his students. Ghost houses are linked with a vigilante group called Islamic Security, or Security of the Revolution, which is staffed by N.I.F. activists who often select the former offices of banned groups, such as the Journalists' Club and the Bar Association Club, to serve as clandestine prisons. As one witness told Africa Watch, "The choice of these clubs is not accidental, but is intended as a humiliation for the groups that have tried to resist the junta." At the Bar Association Club, the new proprietors posted a sign reading HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMBER in the room where detainees are beaten.

It is possible to gauge which groups currently enjoy the good favor of the government by observing who can move about freely after curfew. Since curfew violators are routinely arrested and flogged, to be seen patrolling after hours is a brash assertion of authority and state sanction. Witnesses say that vehicles belonging to Islamic Security and another group, the N.I.F. youth front, Shebaab il-Bina ("Youth for Reconstruction"), regularly crisscross the city late at night, when most clandestine arrests take place and when black market and rationed goods can be moved about. The Shebaab derives its considerable influence from its mafialike control over gas stations, a particularly strategic locus of power in a city in which car owners are rationed four gallons of gasoline a week and in which the black market price per gallon can exceed several days' wages. The quasi-governmental Popular Committees were originally created to oversee the rationing of essential goods such as cooking oil, flour and sugar, but in recent months their responsibilities have been expanded by the R.C.C. to include staffing checkpoints, searching for weapons and arresting dissidents.

The downfall of Bashir's regime has been prophesied with such confidence by his opponents in recent months that it has begun to seem as if only the general himself is unaware that his days are numbered. Of course, he's not taking any chances.

In the early morning hours of April 23, Radio Khartoum announced that a group of disgruntled army officers was attempting a coup. Fighting was reported near the airport and the main army barracks in the satellite city of Khartoum North. By nightfall, however, troops loyal to the government had routed the rebellious units, and in the days that followed at least twenty-eight men, many of them retired senior officers who had earlier called on the government to pursue peace talks with the S.P.L.A., went before a firing squad.

Opinion is divided as to whether a coup attempt actually took place; six of the accused had been arrested several days before April 23 and executed as early as the morning of that day. What is certain, however, is that by ridding himself of his main opponents in the military, Bashir feels he has bought himself more time to implement his program and improve his internal security apparatus. He has also insured that the decisive confrontation, whether it is between the government and the military, or as a result of a popular uprising, will be a bloodbath. □

POVERTY ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI

Down and Out In the Delta

CLAY HATHORN

Sitting in a private bus as it lumbered through poor neighborhoods in Cairo, Illinois, the members of a federal commission sent to save the Mississippi Delta region from its economic plight were out to witness some hardship. Leaning back in the plush seats, the commissioners, all white and male, peered through the smoked-glass windows at housing projects and shirt-sleeved people walking the streets. Hours later, in the gymnasium of a nearby community college, the men took their places behind tables with immaculate tablecloths to hear about the problems of the poor. Nearly a hundred people, most of them middle-class and white, came to read prepared statements about problems in their area, problems that face mainly poor black people. By meeting's end only two commissioners remained. The others, they explained, had had to catch planes to more pressing appointments.

For a region ground down by 150 years of racist economic and political decisions, uneven property distribution and overall neglect of human needs, Congress in 1988 decided that the best hope was a commission—the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission—which would draft a ten-year economic plan to begin turning the region around by the century's close. The fate of 219 counties on either side of the Mississippi River, in Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana, is tied to the plan.

The commission's report, released in May, made more than 400 recommendations for regional cooperation, voluntarism and financial aid. It recognized the need to make the people of the delta "full partners" in the American economy but had little to say about giving the poor access to political and economic power. Roosevelt Sanders, Mississippi Valley State University's liaison to the business community, said the report's call for citizen involvement was on target, but he doubts significant change can occur in ten years, particularly if the region's poor people don't have the means to build their own lives. "Now is the time for the poor people," Sanders said. "They need the voice."

The delta's problems are staggering. In 1980, according to census data, 20.9 percent of delta residents lived in extreme poverty. Some 41.6 percent of households headed by blacks or women were below the poverty line. More current data aren't available, but the Reagan years weren't kind. In 1988 per capita income was $3,385 lower than the national average, a bigger gap than eight years earlier. Jobless rates in some areas exceed 20 percent. In Tunica County, Missis-

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sippi, only 34.7 percent of the adults have graduated from high school. And in Humphreys County, Mississippi, three in 100 babies will die in their first year—an infant mortality rate more than 30 percent higher than that of French Guiana and Chile, and more than twice that of Cuba.

Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, the commission chair, whose political future rests partly with the regional plan's success, said before the panel's findings were released: "This report is going to be different from any federal report you have ever seen before. We need to produce a pithy, pointed document that states clearly, in terms everyone can understand, what must be done in the delta. . . . We want to have a report that everyone in the delta—everyone—can pick up and read and know exactly what he or she has to do to make the delta a full partner in America's future."

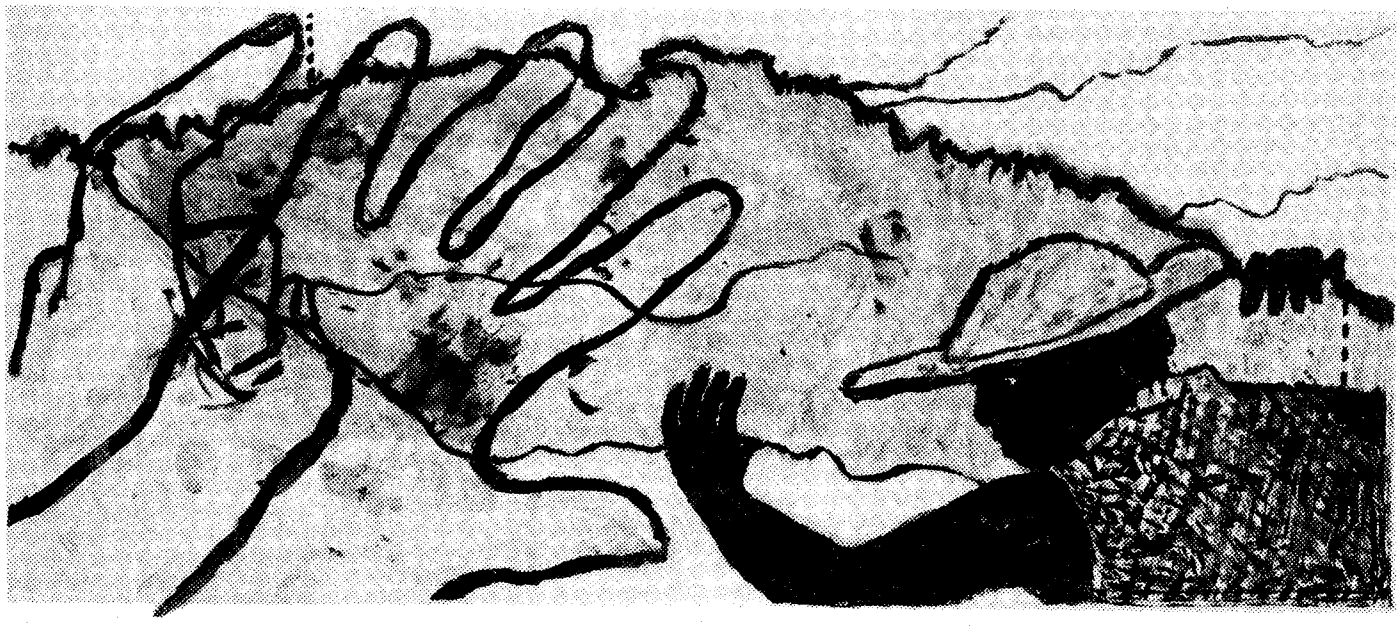
Considering that one in four delta residents dropped out of high school and will have trouble reading the report, the task was overwhelming from the beginning. The 186-page report is broad yet shortsighted, offering hundreds of Band-Aids for a gaping wound. It makes recommendations to improve education, highways and health care. It seeks designation of the region as a "national laboratory" for race relations, calls for the establishment of regional development banks to provide loans to delta businesses and communities, advocates wider use of midwife nursing programs and suggests extension of visas to foreign medical graduates in exchange for work in the delta—a kind of Peace Corps in reverse.

These are all good ideas, but none of them anticipate a restructuring of the ravaged region. Nor could they have, given that the panel's composition insured that its final report would not advocate anything likely to alter the business-as-usual approach favored by the white establishment. In an area where blacks and women are disproportionately affected by poverty, the nine commissioners initially appointed were affluent white men. Partway through their investigations one man dropped out and was replaced by a woman. Besides Clinton there were two other Governors—Mississippi's Ray Mabus and Louisiana's Buddy Roemer—both from the same mold as Clinton, bright young politicians who can ill afford to jeopardize their political careers by upsetting the white business and social structures in the delta. The commission also included two former Congressmen, a onetime president of the American Bar Association, two state government department heads and a university department director.

After some black leaders denounced the group's makeup, the commissioners named Wilbur Hawkins, who is black, as their executive director. Although he couldn't vote on the final recommendations, Hawkins emerged as the commission's driving force in its daily operation. A former program director of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Hawkins, 37, provided a spark to the panel and explored avenues that might have been overlooked had a more conventional politician been named director. In addition to deciding which projects to support and which groups and regions to visit, Hawkins was responsible for overseeing the writing of the final report to Congress and for its presentation. However, as critics note, Hawkins served at the pleasure of the commissioners, and anything he did could be undone. As one Arkansas N.A.A.C.P. leader saw it, Hawkins was "one token hanging from nine strings."

The Delta Commission was based roughly on the Appalachian Regional Commission (A.R.C.), created twenty-five years ago to address Appalachia's poverty. It is worth reviewing the lessons of that earlier project. The A.R.C. has funneled $5.5 billion into the region, 65 percent of which has gone to roads, bridges and other infrastructure development, the theory being that the region didn't have access to the exchange of goods and services. After some gains in the 1970s, Appalachia is in trouble again. Compared with the rest of the nation, two-thirds of its counties are worse off now than when the A.R.C. began, according to John Gaventa, an A.R.C.-watcher and sociologist, who remarked that the good highways have only allowed resources to leave the region quicker.

Ron Eller, director of the University of Kentucky's Appalachian Center, is less critical, contending that the A.R.C. has addressed half of the problem by bringing life to the



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region's population centers and the middle class. It has, however, done little for the rural poor, the very class for which it was created. Money was channeled to city-based leaders, who made recommendations within the corridors with which they were familiar: established business and government. "If we learned anything in Appalachia, we learned that . . . that kind of infrastructure base does work, but it tends to bring unequal and unbalanced growth," Eller said, suggesting equal resources be spent in the delta on infrastructure and human needs, and in building citizen-based development. These last are particularly important in the delta, where social, economic and environmental conditions, including the historically low levels of investment in human resources, are largely products of racism that lingers, taking new shapes and retaining some of the old ones.

The delta, known for its fields of cotton, hasn't always looked the way it does today. In the early 1800s much of it was swamp and forest, and it didn't begin its transformation until after the Civil War. In Mississippi, landowners cleared the forests of the northern delta region for large cotton farms, which provided quick cash to a bankrupt state; they made sharecroppers out of slaves and preserved segregation. Decisions were made on the basis of keeping blacks suppressed. Ray Skates, a historian at the University of Southern Mississippi, said the state has been held back by two forces: "The first is the belief that you could achieve prosperity for whites only. The second is this business of wanting to shun economic progress because of the fear that economic progress might upset the racial status quo."

As long as power resided in agriculture, white farmers didn't care about good schools and good roads as tools for economic growth, just fast workers and spring rains. They didn't court industry. With mechanized farming and a decline in the agricultural economy, workers and then capital dropped out and the delta fell apart. Years of depending upon farming and de-emphasizing education and infrastructure left the region with little to build on. The work force is untrained because there are few jobs; there are few jobs because the workers are unskilled.

In the place of old racist policies have come new ones, such as industrial redlining—industry's practice of avoiding areas with a sizable black population. Last year some black legislators in Arkansas charged that Japanese companies shied away from the delta because of its black population and they demanded to see the records of the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission, the state's industrial recruitment arm. The agency refused and finally convinced the legislature to exempt industrial records from the state's Freedom of Information Act. "I would not be surprised if a scarcity of blacks is something that Japanese companies look for," said Arkansas State Representative William Walker. "I have problems with a state agency allowing that."

The Delta Commission's preliminary report said redlining was "perceived" to be a problem in the delta but offered no specifics about the practice, which is difficult to prove. Although the commission said it would assess the incidence and impact of redlining, the final report never even mentioned it.

Of course, industrial recruitment itself is not an unalloyed benefit. Local leaders will offer tax breaks to lure an industry and secure jobs, but the plant may damage the environment and keep workers at low skill and low pay. "It's a tough call," said Bob Hall, research director at the Institute for Southern Studies in Durham, North Carolina, "but in the end, it doesn't do much good if the community is polluted and the wages are so low the people are still on food stamps. Communities should negotiate more from a position of strength. 'We want you here, but it doesn't come without any conditions.'"

Appalachia's economy was similarly constricted in 1965. Although hurt by absentee-ownership mining rather than segregation-minded plantation farming, and divided more by class than by race, its basis on a failing, undiversified, labor-intensive, low-skill industry was essentially the same. Unlike Appalachia, however, the delta can't expect even a temporary bailout. The A.R.C. was born in the Great Society, when federal funds were given readily for domestic woes. "We aren't going to be able to go to Washington and ask them to write a blank check," said former Congressman Webb Franklin, one of Ronald Reagan's appointees to the panel. "Those days are long gone."

However, the commissioners did make hundreds of recommendations for governmental funds for the delta. No costs were estimated, but even a fraction of the savings and loan bailout would go a long way here. The two lawmakers who helped create the panel, Arkansas Senator Dale Bumpers and Mississippi Representative Mike Espy, said after the report was released that though they hoped the report would shake up Congress, they see a long battle in raising money to pay for the programs. Considering that, in the area of education alone, Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore was awarded more federal money in 1985 than all the colleges and universities in the delta region combined, the commission can make a strong argument for more federal investment in the region.

Yet the experience of Appalachia indicates that federal outlays in themselves do not strike at the core of the problem. Structuring an economy on the delta's shaky foundations will take some measures not tried in the past, measures to bring about economic and political equality and break the plantation mentality and reality. Although the region is poor, it is not bereft of wealth. For example, the census listed 520 households in Tunica County, one of the nation's poorest, with income from $5,000 to $7,499 and ninety-one households with income of more than $50,000, including a few millionaires. "Capital is not extremely scarce in the Delta," the commission's report says.

What the report avoided was the suggestion that a massive shift of wealth and power is necessary. Some ideas are mentioned—landlord-tenant laws, assistance for small family farms, federal mandates for minority contracts, requirements that industry pay the full cost of its environmental impacts—but those need to be stressed. And more severe recommendations are in order: a huge public works program to be handled by the low end of the work force and

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minority companies; sweeping voter registration; taxes on real estate transfers to establish a housing trust fund for low-income people; the sale of foreclosed land to community trusts; compensation to communities when industry abandons them; and pressure, tax and other kinds, to close private schools, which in some delta counties have been used to maintain segregation. Extreme solutions for extreme problems, and the kind of suggestions the panel of once and future politicians and businessmen didn't emphasize.

In a swept-out rural east Arkansas firehouse, sitting in folding metal chairs and fanning themselves casually, Clinton and a handful of commissioners drew a crowd of about seventy-five people in the poor, nearly all-black town of Haynes. Slowly rising to his feet, a gray-haired, disabled man pointed a finger at Clinton to complain. After working for years on a delta farm, even with knee and back problems, Albert Stewart came to ask for help. Stewart, 56, raised sixteen children himself after his wife died. Two of the children are developmentally disabled.

"Now all sixteen are grown up, but I still call them children because the two don't know A from B," Stewart said across the hushed firehouse. "Governor, what am I going to do?" □

Forests

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

Should we sacrifice even these slow-to-regenerate forests of the Northern Rockies for the sake of jobs? The timber industry says yes, but when you consider how automated logging and milling have become these days, the jobs argument breaks down. Giant timber companies like Champion and Plum Creek, Georgia Pacific and Weyerhaeuser, have moved well beyond ax and saw, well beyond horses pulling logs down a mountain. Now they have robotlike machines that grasp and slice off trees like stalks of corn, along with huge mechanical grapplers and loaders. Now, as well as big tractors that knock down trees and tear up the ground, timber companies deploy gigantic "yarders," which squat on ridgetops and send tentacles of steel down forested slopes; these steel cables, pulled slowly over the land, drag down everything in their path.

Logging is still hard and dangerous work, but instead of hundreds of human beings working over one mountain slope—and at least potentially able to select which trees to cut and which to save—we have a few dozen people pushing buttons, hitching chains, marking butt ends to indicate whether the logs are from private or public land.

The more automated the logging, the fewer the jobs and the more devastated the land: denuded soils, streams silting up, trashed fisheries, piles of "slash" (discarded limbs and branches, bushes and small trees) later to be torched, fewer living green things to take in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen, more and more ugliness.

Wilbur Wood is a poet and journalist who writes about human and natural resources.

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Well-meaning attempts to wage peace, after this war, are often inadequate (replanted seedlings struggle to take hold in eroding soils) or they are self-serving (monoculture "tree crops" are generally favored, not a healthy variety of species), or they simply continue the war in another form (chemical herbicides keep "weeds"—or other types of trees—from competing with desired species; chemical pesticides douse insect invaders, which nonetheless multiply with few birds, squirrels or other predators to keep them in balance; chemical residues find their way into the soil and water).

Who pays for all this? Earth pays, of course, which means we pay. And our grandchildren will pay, and their grandchildren. But in the immediate sense, at least in the vast public forests of the Rocky Mountains, the taxpayer tends to pay. Why? Because timber sales here almost always bring in less money than it costs the Forest Service to plot and administer the sales, to monitor wildlife and watersheds, and (especially) to build logging roads.

In all thirteen national forests in the Northern Rockies, the Forest Service Region One office acknowledges, in 1989 taxpayers once again lost money: a $4.1 million outright loss, plus $14.6 million the federal government paid from local and state taxes, for an overall deficit of $18.7 million. But in harvesting 1 billion board feet in 1989, the Forest Service claims 13,590 jobs were created or sustained, and this meant $452.8 million for affected communities.

Even so, many conservationists say it would be cheaper to stop clearcutting these forests, damaging watersheds and destroying wildlife habitat. These conservationists would rather use that federal money to pay local people to replant forests, restore streams and maintain trails for hikers and backpackers.

This is an argument between short-term, boom-and-bust economics and long-term sustainability. The standard short-term economic argument goes like this: "locking up" forests (making them wilderness areas, for example) means no logging, no mining and no drilling jobs, so the local economy will suffer. In fact, while rural America suffered badly during the 1980s, the 277 counties in the United States adjacent to wilderness areas are not, in general, hurting. Consider Montana. In the 1980s Montana's typically cyclic industries—agriculture, wood products, coal and oil, metal mining and federal spending—all hit low points. Most counties lost population in the past decade as people leaked away to places where they could get jobs. But twelve counties gained population; nine of them were wilderness counties.

"Whatever wilderness was doing to these local economies," writes University of Montana economist Tom Power, "it wasn't strangling them by locking up resources. Quite the contrary; these counties became magnets to business and population because of the high quality local environmental resources, many of which are preserved and protected by wilderness." Power points out that "towns built around a single extractive industry, even with unlimited access to raw materials, never really do develop. They remain frontier settlements with a very tenuous lease on life, dictated by world markets."

In many logging towns one sees signs reading, "Timber dollars support this business." But another sign has surfaced in Bozeman, Montana, where a large number of environmental groups have settled. This sign says (recalling Power's study), "Wilderness dollars support this business."

Such polarization characterizes the tree war: In the Pacific Northwest it's jobs versus the spotted owl; in the Rockies it's timber versus wilderness. In Montana there is a nagging dispute over what to do with some 6 million roadless acres, which will remain roadless until Congress decides how many acres will be managed as wilderness and how many will be released for multiple use.

The language in this debate is interesting. "Wilderness" implies, to some people anyway, very little if any human use. But of course plenty of human use already is made of these 6 million acres: travel by foot and horseback, camping, hunting, fishing, livestock grazing—all these occur and would be allowed to continue under wilderness designation. For these uses no "release" need be made.

"Multiple use" is a Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management term that is supposed to mean all sorts of uses get weighed and balanced—the ones listed above, plus motorized recreation, military field maneuvers and of course logging, mining and drilling. Typically, the extractive industries have weighed very heavily because they produce revenue: timber sales, livestock grazing fees and royalties from oil and gas wells, coal and metal-ore mines. Of course, the revenue producers are also impact producers. "Below cost" timber sales are one immediate impact; Montana's sales may be bad, but those in Alaska's Tongass National Forest are worse. There 500-year-old Sitka spruce bring in an absurdly low price: According to the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, timber sales in the Tongass bring in less than 2 cents for every federal dollar invested. Longer-term impacts include degraded watersheds and simplified ecosystems—monocultures of fast-growing pulp trees like lodgepole pine instead of polycultures of fir, spruce and cedar: fiber farms instead of forests.

One of the people I know in Missoula, Montana, Lance Olsen (the Bear Man, I call him; he is head of the Great Bear Foundation) talks a lot about impacts. New logging roads, he points out, provide easy access to bear habitat, but "the

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bear needs lots of room to move around without the risk of being blown away." In the interest of minimizing the impact of logging on bears, Olsen would like to see much of Montana's 6 million roadless acres—not to mention Idaho's 9 million roadless acres—remain de facto wilderness.

But the Bear Man is a pragmatist. Even if we got all 6 million acres, he says, that's not enough for the grizzly bear. We need the cooperation of people who live in bear country. You might think of a typical wilderness advocate as a person unremittingly opposed not only to loggers and miners but also to ranchers who graze sheep or cattle in bear country. But Olsen cultivates ranchers. The Great Bear Foundation has a fund that pays ranchers for livestock they lose to bears. One Montana rancher, Ira Perkins, publicly refused a check recently, saying it was like being bought off. Lance says, "That's Ira's business." But other ranchers quietly accept the foundation's checks, and Lance tells me of one who returned a check but included a check of his own to support the foundation. The rancher said that his livestock losses due to grizzlies were part of the price he paid to live in a beautiful part of the world, and that he was glad to run into somebody who admired bears as much as he did.

There are loggers who admire trees as much as that rancher admires bears. Loggers are often in the woods for reasons other than cutting trees. Many loggers hike, hunt and fish; fret about erosion from clearcuts; and dislike the tactics of giant, absentee-owned corporations. But they also do not like the idea of someone driving a six-inch metal spike into a tree they may have to cut someday.

Of course, very few people advocate spiking trees as a means of preventing timber harvests. Even fewer people actually do it. Earth First!, the activist group that popularized tree spiking, now disavows the practice. After all, who stands to get hurt should a saw blade encounter a hidden spike? Who gets it in the face? Not the officers of Plum Creek Timber or Weyerhaeuser. Not the corporate raider who takes over Pacific Lumber in northern California (a company that has logged its 196,000 acres in a reasonably sustainable manner for decades) and begins to liquidate assets—redwoods—at a frighteningly unsustainable rate. No, these people are far from forest or mill. But just talking about tree spiking—not even doing it—helps maintain the climate of polarization, and in this climate locals who mourn the demise of the forests keep silent.

This silence serves the absentee owners, whose strategy is divide and conquer. In Montana's branch of the tree war, divide and conquer lately has suited the Republican Party in the debate over those 6 million roadless acres. In 1988, after years of squabbling, Montana's two Democratic Senators and one Democratic Representative—with the other Representative, a Republican, abstaining—came up with a bill designating 1.4 million acres as wilderness, with multiple use for the rest. Just before the 1988 Congressional election, however, President Reagan vetoed this bill. Republicans think the veto helped their candidate, Conrad Burns, upset the bill's chief promoter, Senator John Melcher, in the same year, and they believe continued polarization over timber and wilderness will work against Democratic Senator Max Baucus, up for re-election in 1990.

Both Burns and Baucus have proposed "interim" solutions to the wilderness controversy. Leaving 3 million acres to be dealt with later, Burns would set aside 600,000 acres as wilderness while denying citizens the right to protest Forest Service management decisions on the remaining 2.4 million acres released by his bill. Baucus would delay action on 2 million acres, preserve 870,000 acres, and release 3.2 million, with no language denying the right to environmental protests. Timber companies favor Burns's version. Wilderness advocates abhor both. The Alliance for the Wild Rockies scoffs at Baucus's higher figure of 870,000 acres: "It's all rock and ice," said a spokesperson. Neither proposal is likely to pass this year.

Polarization may be a short-term corporate—and Republican—tactic in the tree war here, but privatization is surely the long-term goal. Last year Montana's Burns joined five other Republican Senators (Steve Symms and James McClure of Idaho, Alaska's Ted Stevens, South Carolina's Strom Thurmond and North Carolina's Jesse Helms) in ask-

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ing for corporate support of the Our Land Society, an Arizona-based group whose agenda includes opening some national parks, wilderness areas and wildlife preserves to mining and oil drilling. The society also advocates cutting all old-growth forests. Our Land claims that young trees will absorb more carbon dioxide and produce more oxygen than "decadent" old-growth trees—a claim, by the way, that has been proved false.

Supporters of Our Land include big timber corporations and Exxon, the Farm Bureau, the Motorcycle Industry Council, the United Four-Wheel Drive Association and the American Freedom Coalition, which has ties with South Korean Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church. Such advocates of privatization argue that public control of trees, grass, minerals and other resources offers little incentive to manage these resources wisely, while private control does. I understand this argument. I know ranchers, for example, who manage their grass very carefully because if they don't, they or their descendants will be out of business. But this argument presupposes private owners who intend to stay around for a while, not raiders who strip off all salable assets and then move on. This argument assumes local, not global, control of resources.

Small-scale privatization may lead to good stewardship, but global-scale privatization seems to lead mainly to boom-bust economies and eventual ruin. Not only in Montana but in the entire Northwest private timber holdings have been overcut, and many of the raw logs have been shipped directly to Japan, especially during the 1980s. The Western Wood Products Association estimates that one-fifth of the timber from twelve Western states is being exported. The Audubon Society thinks that figure may be low.

Japan has paid well for these logs because it has been experiencing a building boom. But of course it is not only logs that are exported; it is also jobs. Japanese mills, not American ones, turn these logs into lumber. Thus—polarized, privatized and globalized—have we fallen to the status of colony. Thus are we treated like any Third World country: as a source of unprocessed raw materials for First World empires.

To help keep sawmill jobs in the United States, a ban on exporting raw logs cut in federal forests has been enacted on a year-by-year basis ever since the late 1960s. Despite timber industry pressure, Congress will probably extend this ban. But in the meantime, profits from the liquidation of private forests enable the big timber corporations to outbid smaller local companies—which generally possess no great private holdings—for access to public trees. Plum Creek Timber is an example. Plum Creek forecasts that by 1996 harvests will decline by 33 percent on its private timberlands—lands that Plum Creek's former parent company, Burlington Northern Railroad, received via federal land grants during an earlier privatization boom in the late 1800s. Plum Creek now gets just 12 percent of its timber from public forests, but it wants to get more and is now planning to erect ever more mechanized mills to process this "public" timber—assuming the ban on exporting raw logs continues. Meanwhile smaller, less mechanized, locally owned mills cut back or shut down.

I know one local mill owner in western Montana—we'll call him O.M.—who tries to stay alive in this atmosphere by specializing in higher-quality woods, such as cedar, out of which he prefabricates fence "kits" for suburban homeowners and hobby farmers. O.M. is doing a couple of things that I think will help people survive in our "frontier towns" after the big guys have left: He is adding value to local raw materials, and he is looking for market "niches" where he can sell his product. Lance Olsen agrees with these localization strategies, but the Bear Man is glum when I tell him about O.M.: "If he's working with cedar then he's in trouble." Regrowth of cedar in old clearcuts is apparently only 15 percent or 20 percent of the original growth at best. "The worst practice going on now," O.M. says, "is clearcutting." It's been like a binge, he says, "but the binge can't go on. We can't keep cutting in the way we've been doing it, due to problems with erosion and who knows what else." He says, "There ought to be a ban on cutting all old-growth forests." O.M. knows that in fifty years, a hundred years, very little high-quality wood will be growing in these mountains.

One response to this is to make the best of the leftovers. A carpenter-contractor I know in Missoula, Steve Loken, figures that soon high-quality lumber won't be available so he's advancing a concept he calls "scraptech": making building materials not only out of pulpwood and sawdust but out of all the garbage produced in such abundance by this civilization—plastics, paper, glass, even ash (which would strengthen masonry blocks).

Another response is to keep working to change the current highly mechanized, energy-intensive, capital-intensive logging practices. Olsen tells me he's done a little horse logging, and he knows horse loggers who'll point to a clearcut and then point to a patch of forest the same size, which they have logged selectively, "and it still looks like a forest!" Immature trees and some older seed trees are still standing, underbrush is not destroyed, soil is only minimally churned up. Then comes the kicker: Both cuts have yielded the same amount of board feet of usable timber!

I don't know if many local loggers are ready to reinstitute horse logging on a grand scale, but clearly the path to sustainable forestry means more labor-intensive, biologically sensitive techniques.

I know that "locals" can be thoughtless and predatory, and that "outsiders" can be sensitive and conserving, but the best antidote to global rape-and-run is more local self-reliance. This includes adding value to local renewable resources before shipping them away. The best antidote to gigantic machines crunching over the land is human-scale technology. This allows us to see that planting trees is worth at least as much as cutting them down. The best antidote to an economy that wastes the Earth is—like Steve Loken's scraptech—to find clever ways to convert waste into wealth.

Out of the wreckage, a sustainable economy for this region begins to take shape. It is based on the insight implicit in Tom Power's study of Montana's wilderness counties: "Quality of life" has economic value. True wealth means stopping our war against nature and making peace with our trees. □

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EDITORIALS.

(*Continued From Page 41*)
name as a photographer. It's about the fate of the artist in the current hysterical climate." BRUCE SHAPIRO

Bruce Shapiro is a contributor to Building Bridges: The Emerging Grassroots Coalition of Labor and Community *(Monthly Review Press). For information on the Sturges/Semien defense fund, call (415) 550-0719.*

Western Front

Fundamentalism is spreading westward; now it has invaded the Maghreb. The results of Algeria's June 12 local elections, in which the Islamic Salvation Front (F.I.S.) won more than half of the country's town halls, including Algiers, Oran and all the other big cities, were stunning—but not really surprising. The National Liberation Front (F.L.N.), which has run the country for the twenty-eight years since independence, is falling apart like the regimes of Eastern Europe. Once it stood for resistance to French colonialism. Now, for the bulk of the population, it stands for mismanagement, injustice and corruption. After the bloody riots of October 1988, in which several hundred young people were killed, President Chadli Benjedid opted for both political and economic liberalization. But in a country whose ever-present economic crisis is aggravated today by dwindling oil revenues, and where nearly a quarter of the labor force is jobless, these liberal remedies have meant still more striking inequalities in living standards and an even greater degree of popular discontent.

The F.I.S., set up only sixteen months ago, has taken advantage of this mood. True, it has no economic solutions to offer beyond liberalism and Islamic law. Its education and family policies are enough to send shivers down the spine of Algeria's many emancipated women. But the Islamic Front has managed to emerge as the main moral alternative to the discredited F.L.N., and on June 12 it was helped by an election boycott by the two main opposition parties that kept 35 percent of voters away from the polls. The leader of the F.I.S., Abassi al-Madani, a white-robed, bearded former Algiers University professor, now wants to turn his municipal victory into a parliamentary and then a presidential triumph. Quite understandably, he is in a hurry.

But the other side, for opposite reasons, is not. Will President Benjedid finally yield to the pressure for early elections? Will the F.L.N. split? Will the army take sides, or will it play its own game? Above all, will the lay and democratic forces, which are not negligible in Algeria, find time to mobilize and provide an alternative platform that is both radical and realistic, one that offers hope and dignity to the rising generation? The answers to those questions are crucial, for the success or failure of the Islamic Front in Algeria will have an impact on Tunisia and Morocco, the other countries of the Maghreb, as well as on the immigrant population in France. Much is at stake, although it should be added—in fairness to the Algerians—that the Muslim world is not the only place in today's political arena in which the secular left appears unable to arrest the forward march of irrational forces. DANIEL SINGER

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s Europe correspondent.*

Cutting WIC

Blaming increases in the price of food, at least half the states are cutting a federally funded nutrition program designed to help poor families. Under the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Washington currently distributes to state agencies $2.1 billion (enough to help only half those eligible), which is converted into vouchers for milk, cereal, orange juice and infant formula. But recent price hikes for those items have pushed the states to reduce the number of people in the program, the amount given each participant, or both. Texas, for example, has cut by one-third its cereal allowance to 1- and 2-year-olds and will remove 27,000 women and children from the program.

The New York Times cites such factors as "the freeze that ravaged the Florida citrus crop" and a reduction in milk output for the rise in food costs. But the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington, D.C., think tank, says corporate avarice is at work too. Center representatives point to "a pattern of cooperation among the major companies to increase the prices the nutrition program must pay for infant formula." From 1979 to 1989, the three major infant formula companies increased the wholesale price of their product by at least 145 percent—in that same period the cost of milk, the main ingredient in the formula, rose only 36 percent.

For poor families the cuts will cause more fetal and infant deaths and mental disability. Frank Oski, a professor of pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, says WIC was instrumental in virtually eradicating infant iron deficiency, which can produce learning deficiencies for at least the first five years of life. David Rush, a doctor who directed a study supported by the Department of Agriculture, found that women who participated in the WIC program had longer pregnancies and therefore fewer premature births.

In 1982 the United States ranked seventeenth in global infant mortality; today it is nineteenth. In Washington and Detroit infant death rates are nearly twice the national average. WIC has proved that it can help reverse this tragic trend. Instead of being cut it should be expanded. But clearly that's not enough. As a 1985 *Scientific American* study concluded, infant mortality can be fought successfully through "redistribution of wealth and an emphasis on equal participation in health services." That is the real right-to-life issue. GIDEON FORMAN

Gideon Forman is a former Nation *intern who attends McGill University.*

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

A Prophet With Honor

ADAM HOCHSCHILD

MEMOIRS. *By Andrei Sakharov. Translated by Richard Lourie. Knopf. 800 pp. $29.95.*

In the summer of 1978 Andrei Sakharov had not yet been exiled from Moscow and was still able to receive visitors in his home on Chkalov Street. The elevator in his building was not working, and my wife and I climbed many flights of stairs in near darkness. When we finally made it to the eighth floor, Sakharov himself opened the door to an apartment full of light, warmth and talk. He was wearing his trademark cardigan sweater, unbuttoned down the front. His eyebrows sloped downward at the outer ends, giving his face a peaked look. He seemed like a kindly, shy professor welcoming students.

In Sakharov's kitchen, some fifteen people were packed around a table that normally would seat seven or eight. The doorbell and telephone rang constantly. One guest, a white-haired man in his late 70s, was a link to the past: Evgeny Gnedin was a soldier in the Russian Civil War, a Soviet diplomat of the 1930s and a veteran of sixteen years of prison and exile. His torture was personally supervised by Stalin's secret police chief, Lavrenti Beria. But we did not have time to talk to him before Sakharov returned from the front door with a new arrival. "Here is someone for you," he told the gathering, "back only one week."

A tall, thin young man followed Sakharov into the kitchen. He was carrying a piece of paper, which Sakharov passed around the table for everyone to look at. It was a document certifying that a week ago this man had completed a sentence of five years of imprisonment and three of Siberian exile. The newcomer explained that he had been a lathe operator at an oil tanker shipyard on the Black Sea. Workers there had not been paid as promised. His crime was that he and some others printed a leaflet of protest, then marched to the local party headquarters to complain. In the Siberian camps, he said, he had met others also exiled for labor organizing. He had come here as soon as he was released to thank Sakharov for his support of political prisoners.

As the organizer told his story, one of the others seated at the table—a burly, black-bearded man in his 60s—questioned him about various camps. He must have been a former prisoner too, for in speaking to the stranger he used the familiar form, *ti*, as do all prisoners with one another in almost every language that makes the distinction. The bearded man turned out to be Lev Kopelev—writer, scholar, veteran of ten years in the prison camps and the model for the character of Rubin in Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*. He and his wife, the literary critic Raisa Orlova, spoke English and helped translate some of the rapid-fire conversation around the table for us.

The phone rang in the next room. It was someone calling from abroad for Sakharov. When he started to speak, the line went dead. He said this happened often. Another phone call, this one from Lithuania, brought news of a new indictment in a case against nationalists there. Now the center of attention shifted to another guest, Marya Slepak, the wife of Vladimir Slepak, a leader of the Jewish emigration movement who had recently been sentenced to five years in exile for hanging a banner from their apartment window. She shrugged off someone's words of comfort with a *nichevo* ("It is nothing"), meaning: It could be much worse. Now she herself had just been given permission to go to Siberia and join her husband. Elena Bonner, Sakharov's wife and herself the daughter of a victim of the purges, took a chair and climbed up on it to reach a kitchen cupboard. She began passing down cans of food for Slepak to take on her trip. Others passed food and gifts across the table as well. One woman gave Slepak some American chewing gum, a prized delicacy, explaining to me, "That's for her to give the station ticket agent when he tells her there are no seats left."

Reluctantly, we left with the other guests around 11 P.M. Sakharov apologized that he had not had time to answer some questions I had prepared for him. "But I think it was more important," he said, "for you to hear what that young man had to say."

I wrote about that evening after coming home, moved by the bravery of the people around that table. But it is a slightly different aspect of the occasion that looms larger as I look back on it now. In countries where people are persecuted for speaking their minds, I have noticed, solidarity among those oppressed all too often extends only to those who agree with their views. This is especially true in a country like Russia, whose centuries-old intolerance is mirrored in the contempt for democracy even of dissenters like Solzhenitsyn. But the extraordinary thing about Sakharov was the universality of his commitment to free speech. He used his immense prestige to support almost anyone in trouble, no matter what their opinions: labor organizers and poets, Baltic nationalists and *samizdat* publishers, Zionists and Pentecostal Christians.

Sakharov's *Memoirs*, completed just a few months before his fatal heart attack last year, gives a fascinating, and at times overwhelming, picture of the man. It is a vast sprawling monster of a book, some 800 pages long. A glossary of names mentioned in the text, added by the publishers, runs more than a dozen pages by itself. The book could have used considerable editing, but I feel petty complaining: Several times as he was writing it, K.G.B. agents stole parts of the manuscript, at one point making off with five months' worth of Sakharov's work and forcing him to reconstruct laboriously. We are lucky the book exists at all.

Despite the sprawl, the flood of names and the incomprehensible (to me) passages on high-energy physics, there is a sweep and majesty to this book, as there was to the way Sakharov's life spanned so many worlds. He writes about black holes in space and the origin of the universe; about the handshake of Beria ("plump, slightly moist, and deathly cold"); about how, en route to a Soviet hydrogen bomb test, he came across the unexpected dazzling beauty of the autumn "ice rush" of floes crashing together on northward-flowing Siberian rivers; and he describes with great vividness the first explosions of that bomb whose main creator he was. Its awesome power gave him a deep sense of foreboding, much like that felt by Sakharov's American counterpart, J. Robert Oppenheimer, after

Adam Hochschild's new book, The Mirror at Midnight: A South African Journey, *will be published by Viking this fall.*

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watching the first explosion of *his* bomb a decade earlier.

Sakharov's mind never stopped working. Even during his exile for most of the 1980s to the closed city of Gorky, when K.G.B. raids grew so frequent that he and his wife left a key in their door so police would not break the lock each time, he spent six months mastering the exotic physics of "string theory." One time when the K.G.B. stole his manuscripts they netted part of these memoirs, some scientific works and an essay on Pushkin. Can one imagine Edward Teller writing about Melville or Mark Twain?

Like all books that matter, this one is the story of a moral journey. As a young man, Sakharov mourned the death of Stalin; three decades later, he was on a hunger strike, which the state finally broke with painful forced feeding. A celebratory dinner after a 1955 bomb test seems to have been a turning point in his life. Sakharov proposed a toast: "May all our devices explode as successfully as today's, but always over test sites and never over cities." After this, he writes, "The table fell silent, as if I had said something indecent." Then the Soviet marshal in charge of the bomb program replied, "Let me tell a parable. An old man wearing only a shirt was praying before an icon. 'Guide me, harden me. Guide me, harden me.' His wife . . . said: 'Just pray to be hard, old man, I can guide it in myself.' Let's drink to getting hard."

After this, says Sakharov, "I drank my brandy in silence and didn't open my mouth again for the rest of the evening. Many years have passed, but I still feel as if I had been lashed by a whip. . . . We . . . had created a terrible weapon, the most terrible weapon in human history; but. . . . [t]he people at the top of the Party and military hierarchy would make the decisions." From this point on, Sakharov was increasingly obsessed with moral and political issues.

Sakharov did not become a pariah until he left the Soviet nuclear weapons program in the late 1960s and began writing and speaking about peace and human rights. His scientific stature and, later, his Nobel Prize kept him out of prison, but the government harassed him in every other conceivable way. The K.G.B. inserted death threats in envelopes that others mailed to him, hounded all his children and stepchildren out of their jobs, poured glue in the locks of his car and orchestrated a ceaseless series of attacks on him in the press, often with anti-Semitic overtones (Sakharov's wife is half Jewish). They set up a special jamming station so Sakharov and Bonner could not hear foreign broadcasts in Gorky. At one point they drugged Sakharov into unconsciousness in order to steal some manuscripts he was carrying; at another, he suspects, they gave a convulsion-inducing drug to his grandson. Throughout this entire period, he and Bonner—a doctor, who had been wounded at the front in World War II—had heart trouble and other medical problems.

In the end, however, it is not people's sufferings that ennoble them but what they make of those experiences. Sakharov turned his own hardships into a window through which he saw those of his fellow citizens. He soon realized that the harsh contempt poured on him almost daily in the government press was advertising him, in effect, as his country's unofficial ombudsman. People all across the Soviet Union wrote to him or came to see him with their problems. Some, he says, were crazy. But from others he learned all sorts of things he had thought little about before: the exile of the Crimean Tatars, the pollution of Lake Baikal, the curbs on religious freedom. He visited prison camps and attended dozens of political trials, from Lithuania to Tashkent. These matters take up much of the book, just as, on that remarkable evening at his home, he preferred to let others do the talking.

What one is left with after all the stories is the tone of voice that binds them together. It is a curiously mild voice, with an old-fashioned courtliness to it. Sakharov is rarely bitter and almost always forgiving—toward a scientific mentor who withdraws his signature from a petition protesting the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, toward other prominent scientists afraid to speak out, even toward victims of the state who confess to nonexistent crimes: "I don't think it's right to condemn anyone for recanting. Human strength has its limitations. . . . And those who break are often their own harshest critics." Among his sorrows are the troubles he has caused for others: In one raid on his apartment, he says regretfully, the K.G.B. took a book that someone else had lent him.

In his politics, Sakharov was basically a Western European social democrat. He believed in full human rights of every sort, including the right of his country's constituent republics to secede. Unlike the ferociously conservative Solzhenitsyn

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and most other Soviet exiles and émigrés, Sakharov saw good in both capitalism and socialism, and believed not only that the two systems should converge but that they would inevitably do so. As a scientist, he felt that an effective antimissile system—the essence of Star Wars—was impossible. One of the few things I would fault him for is his benign view of the motives of right-wingers in the West, a naïveté that allowed the Reaganites to make use of Sakharov's belief, also mistaken, that the West had to build up certain missiles and conventional weapons in order to negotiate from strength with the Soviet Union. Happily, the last year or two has made some of this irrelevant; by the end of his life, as the danger of nuclear war receded, he saw environmental catastrophe as the principal danger facing humankind.

Sakharov was the youngest person ever elected to the Soviet Academy of Sciences, a position of enormous prestige which has no equivalent here. The drama of his life is that it was from that pinnacle of privilege that he chose to become his country's leading critic. His story reminds one of another great Russian dissenter, Protopop Avakuum. Like Sakharov, Avakuum, a famous archpriest of the 1600s, challenged the authorities of his time. As Isaac Deutscher writes, he

> exposed the corruption of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and took up the cause of the oppressed peasants. He was unfrocked, jailed, banished first to Siberia and then to the Mongolian frontier, starved and tortured; but he refused to recant. His family suffered with him. . . . It was in Siberia that he wrote his autobiography, a work which made an epoch in Russian literature; and he continued to preach with such effect that his fame as "hero and martyr for truth" grew in the country. Banished, he was even more dangerous to his enemies than he had been when he stood near the Throne.

The same was true of Sakharov in his banishment several centuries later. In the end, welcomed back to Moscow by Mikhail Gorbachev and elected to the Congress of People's Deputies, Sakharov was far luckier than Avakuum, who was burned at the stake. The late Raisa Orlova, whom I first met that evening in Sakharov's kitchen, once told me a story about him. The director of a research institute came to see him one day with a vexing scientific problem. The entire institute had been working on it unsuccessfully for three months; Sakharov solved it in an afternoon. Grateful, but uncomprehending of Sakharov's concern for human rights, the director later told somebody, "What a tragedy that such a great scientist should waste his time on such foolishness!" But unlike many prophets, Sakharov lived long enough to see his foolishness recognized as greatness. □

Perestroika From Below

ANTHONY ASTRACHAN

THE AWAKENING OF THE SOVIET UNION. *By Geoffrey Hosking. Harvard University Press. 182 pp. $19.95.*

The Soviet Union is experiencing one of the great moments of history. The changes there affect politics, economics and the flow of ideas in almost every country in the world. *The Awakening of the Soviet Union* does more to help English speakers understand these changes than any of the dozens of books on the subject published in the past five years.

Geoffrey Hosking has chosen not to write history from above, as most experts do. Instead of focusing on Mikhail Gorbachev and the reforms identified with him, he looks at things "from the viewpoint of the society he [Gorbachev] is trying to transform." It's a wonderful idea. People and forces outside the Kremlin help or hinder change as much as the men in the Politburo, and Hosking casts a clear light on many of them.

Hosking, professor of Russian history at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London, goes deep into tradition to explain the futility of looking at official institutions in Russia. Under czar and commissar alike, such institutions haven't functioned as intended because "people improvise a facade for the occasional appearance of the dreaded 'government inspector,' but otherwise do their own thing in their own way, treating officials as just another unpredictable element in a forbidding environment."

The thing that was their own, the unofficial institution that survived and functioned in a profound way for at least three centuries, was the peasant *mir*—the commune that exacted conformity and collective discipline as the price for its guarantee of survival in adverse conditions. The *mir* was transformed into the workers' *artel* as peasants migrated to cities in the nineteenth century. The *artel* and the intellectuals' equivalent, the *kruzhok* or circle in which it was safe to talk, in turn gave birth to the soviets—councils of workers, soldiers and peasants, often led by intellectuals—of the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. The Bolsheviks took over the soviets and dehumanized them, making them institutions of a totalitarian system.

Today it looks as if the soviets may become institutions of something approaching a democratic system. But Hosking shows that the *mir*, the *artel* and the *kruzhok* keep reappearing. They adapted to the Communists' transformation of an agricultural economy into an industrialized one in the 1930s, and the transformation of a country of illiterate peasants into a society of educated city dwellers in the 1960s and 1970s. The modern versions of the *artel* and the *kruzhok* kept the seeds of pluralism alive under a totalitarian system as it went through Stalin's, Khrushchev's and Brezhnev's variations. They function today, sometimes as supporters of change (the informal groups centering on a range of concerns from the environment to rock music, for example, which often force the pace of *perestroika*), sometimes as opponents (the unofficial labor unions that have called strikes to demand food and housing, which will come only with economic reform, but oppose the profit-seeking cooperatives that might help provide them, as well as the price rises that will come with any meaningful reform).

Hosking insists that the term "totalitarian" need not be applied in the hostile manner of the cold war or in the static manner that portrays society as putty in the hands of the ruling party. He defines Soviet totalitarianism in terms that are familiar but seldom so succinctly stated: the Communist Party's monopoly of power, jobs and ideology, and its central command of the economy. The totalitarian experience explains both the need for radical reform in the Soviet Union and the difficulty in carrying it out.

He's more original in his list of crucial features. One is that the totalitarian pol-

Anthony Astrachan is working on a study of individuals who challenge and change the Soviet system. He was The Washington Post*'s Moscow correspondent from 1969 to 1971.*

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ity is traumatized by its own past. He points out, as few Western observers do, that the millions of deaths and deportations under Stalin shaped the minds and bruised the souls of his survivors. Those experiences explain the resistance to historical criticism and to each new attempt to analyze the roles of Stalin and Lenin, as well as the delays in publishing Solzhenitsyn, who for so long was the only writer who tried to restore the Soviet memory of time past. Hosking doesn't mention the way France and Germany are haunted by their respective pasts of collaboration and Nazism, but he stimulates the reader to ponder the differences between the Soviets' attempts, however halting, to face their history and the French and German attempts to deny theirs, even though (or perhaps because) their traumas, injuries and deformations didn't go as deep.

Another crucial feature of totalitarianism is that its claim to rule rests on ideology; it is therefore a system, unlike most in the West, that attributes paramount importance to ideas. Ideology may put students to sleep in the required courses in Marxism-Leninism, but it encourages even dissidents to think systematically about issues, to see problems as a whole and take up vehement stances on them, to disdain or ignore incremental change and compromise. The very confidence in ideas that the ideology created made alternatives to the system's ideas attractive, like forbidden fruit, and helped create the dissidents of the 1960s and 1970s and the radicals who have emerged in the Congress of People's Deputies and other places.

Finally, Hosking maintains that the totalitarian society opens an unusually deep and radical split between the individual's public and private selves. In public, people profess conformity (another legacy of the *mir*); in private, they pursue their own cultural interests, producing a warmth and what Hosking describes as an unusually high level of conversation when a few people who trust one another get together. He warns that this split may be almost as deep today as it was in the era of stagnation, so that the Soviet media version of "public opinion" cannot always be trusted.

Hosking says that Soviet dissent grew out of such private intellectual ferment when the state invaded the dissidents' private worlds and charged them with anti-Soviet propaganda "for circulating among themselves thoughts not admitted to the official canon." He says, I think

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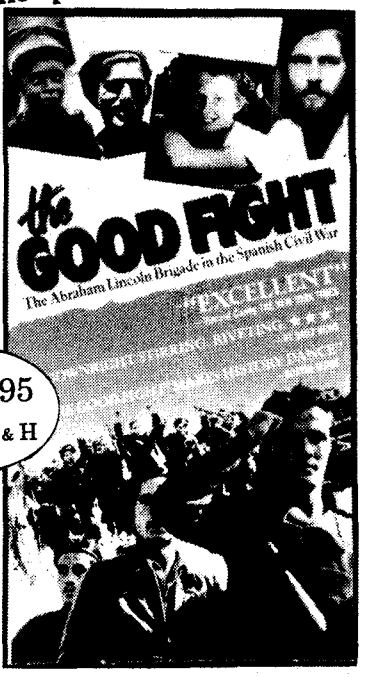

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correctly, that Westerners erred when they took dissent as a movement aiming to bring about political change. But dissidents kept the possibility of political change alive, as I and some other correspondents noted in 1970, and that drove the ideologues into a rage I'm sorry Hosking didn't take a page to describe. I'm also sorry he oversimplifies the long and complex role of Andrei Sakharov, who did not start as the tribune of dissent that he ultimately became, even though he called for the kind of change we now associate with Gorbachev as early as 1970.

Hosking does recognize that dissent brought forth political fruits. Indeed, his chapter "The Return of the Repressed" does a better job than any recent broad-scale historian of tracing the many relationships of dissent and political change, from the arrest of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel in 1965 to the *samizdat* journal "Chronicle of Current Events," the growth of specialized human rights groups and independent trade unions, and the role of the intelligentsia. He mentions Sakharov and other scientists; Alexander Tvardovsky, the editor of *Novy Mir* and publisher of Solzhenitsyn; and Gorbachevians like the economist Abel Aganbegyan and the sociologist Tatiana Zaslavskaya. I keep regretting things he omitted from this chapter, like the Nobel Prize-winners' demand that geneticist Zhores Medvedev be released from a psychiatric hospital, but in those few pages Hosking does quote Soviet readers' devastating reactions to *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* as examples of a Freudian return of the repressed "with tremendous emotional force."

The return of the repressed, or at least the restoration of memory, was a step in the creation of what Hosking calls "a civil society in embryo." Hosking traces its development first in the growth of Soviet environmental movements, which have received little attention in America except for the reaction to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. He cites such undramatic turning points as a 1987 decree banning the felling of trees around Lake Baikal, and such dramatic ones as the 1988 suicide of Valery Legasov, first deputy chairman of the Kurchatov Atomic Energy Institute, who left as a testament a *Pravda* article calling the Chernobyl incident "the apotheosis of the whole misguided way of running the economy which we had been pursuing for decades." Hosking then looks at the elements of civil society in the unofficial Soviet peace movement, in the informal clubs that have proliferated rapidly, in popular fronts in many nationalities and in the opposition groups that eliminated *nomenklatura* nominees in the 1989 elections to the Congress of People's Deputies.

Some Soviet nationalities, such as those of the Baltics, have gone further than the Soviet Union as a whole in building a modern civil society. Others, from the Armenians to the Kirghiz and Uzbeks, seem to be trapped in romantic or feudal pasts. Hosking's survey of nationalities gives a clearer picture of past history and current explosive problems in thirty-five pages than most whole books on the subject, which tend to be exhausting rather than exhaustive.

Russian nationalism has recently been marked both by anti-Semitic outbursts from the organization Pamyat and by the election of Boris Yeltsin as President of the Russian Republic. Hosking fears an alliance between the conservative apparatchiks trying to preserve their power and a militant Great Russian nationalism, a problem Yeltsin has not yet faced. But Hosking also notes something few correspondents have reported: Some Russian nationalists reject the October Revolution and propose an economic model "designed to avoid the twin dangers of the command economy and unregulated capitalism." The critic Mikhail Antonov, for instance, talks of a "civilised co-operative," by which he means a modern version of *mir* and *artel*. He criticizes reformers such as Zaslavskaya and Nikolai Shmelev, advocates of a market economy, for remaining bogged down in bourgeois economics; Hosking says Antonov's proposals are close in spirit to the ideas of Ernst Schumacher and the West German Greens.

I wish Hosking had devoted more than two pages to cooperatives, the licensed but heavily handicapped version of small private enterprises, though he is good on why they're loved (they find things to sell and get things done), why they're hated (they charge very high prices, and Russians are jealous of success), why they succeed (the entrepreneurial imagination survived seventy years of Communist rule) and why they fail (there is no effective law on commercial contracts or private property, so it's easy for opponents to harass and destroy them). A historian from below should record how the people of Saltykovka set a new pig farm on fire rather than let anyone make a profit by addressing the desperate shortage of meat.

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Hosking ends his book where most observers begin, with the paradox of Gorbachev's reforms, or what Sakharov called the attempt "to achieve democratic change by undemocratic means." He wonders how the regime will secure the things it has declared necessary for its own kind of pluralism: a multiplicity of associations to express the full variety of social interests, the democratization of the party and the entrenchment of the rule of law and a high level of culture.

He produces no answers because the situation is still evolving. A postscript traces events through September 1989, a year he feels has seen changes in the Soviet system more far-reaching than any since the death of Stalin. But even without the postscript, I never felt that Hosking was out of date, as are many current books on Soviet affairs. The people and forces that he analyzes are still shaping events, and his description of them makes clear why he regards the Soviet future with "both hope and foreboding." □

Gland Illusion

FÉLIX JIMÉNEZ

THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA. *By Hanif Kureishi. Viking. 284 pp. $18.95.*

Karim Amir is squeezing a favorite penis (not his own) to Pink Floyd's "Ummagumma." He's 17. In order to squeeze so, he's forgone a dreaded chess club meeting and gone out with his father, Haroon, for a karmic night around town. Karim is no Janis Ian inventing lovers on the phone. As he will tell you, he's from suburbia, South London, and going somewhere—to the *real* London, the asterisk, the inevitable tour of duty, and then, who knows? He'll follow his dreams with an unquenchable sense of erection. Karim, you know, is the master of ocular desires, just as his Pop is the Buddha of Suburbia, addicted to yoga and Lu Po and Lao Tzu and lusty nights.

Hanif Kureishi (yes, *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*) has crowded into less than 300 pages what might be called a novel but is rather a constant, furious, streaming 1970s circle-jerk that takes in Pakistanis, Indians, Englishmen and Americans as well. The initial cast of characters includes Charlie (Karim's squeezing partner and a rock-superstar wannabe) and Charlie's mother, Eva Kay, who doubles as Haroon's lover. Both couples make love in the first seventeen pages—Haroon and Eva on a public bench, Karim and Charlie in a bed—and then father and son go back home, complicitous, to poor old Mum, Margaret, who won't sleep with a man "stinking of sick and puking all night."

That's South London in this novel, a place where flesh is king and Buddha: Everybody yields and everybody knows. The day after the opening trysts, Karim finds his mother's sketchbook, a kind of minimalist diary where everything is summarily recorded. She knows. She even knows about Eva's most intimate secret (her one-breasted chest) and has detachedly inked her view of it for posterity, along with her husband's tragic, paunchy figure:

> Standing next to him, slightly taller, was Eva, also naked, complete with one large breast. They were holding hands like frightened children, and faced us without vanity or embellishment, as if to say: This is all that we are, these are our bodies. They looked like John Lennon and Yoko Ono. How could Mum be so objective?

But objectivity, it seems, leads to dead-end streets in South London, where only the pragmatic and the adulterous prevail. By the end of part one, "In the Suburbs," the marriage has crumbled, Haroon and Eva continue with their carnal rampage and mystical entertaining (nights spent discussing the secrets of Confucianism, Sufism, all isms, with friends) and poor Margaret is left to her soap-opera self. "You both left me," she pines to Karim as he prepares to follow Charlie to London.

Part two, "In the City," picks up three years later, when Karim is 20 and planted in London, with Dad and Eva and a few desires: "parties where girls and boys you didn't know took you upstairs and fucked you . . . all the drugs you could use. You see, I didn't ask much of life; this was the extent of my longing. But at least my goals were clear and I knew what I wanted." One-track mind? Well, the problem with the novel is not Karim's unbearable fascination with phallic phantoms but the fact that he's been listening to Cat Stevens too much. Although musical references pop up throughout the book—everything from Nat King Cole to the Rolling Stones to Pete Townshend—the only song that really comes to one's mind is Stevens's syrupy "Father and Son": *Look at me, I am old but I'm happy.* Karim's politics are every bit as suburban as his father's, he just punks it out differently. When Haroon—*a k a* Daddio, God or Harry—ends his marriage, wanders around and stays up late, Karim takes notes. He'll surely repeat the feat, make it better, less boring. And he won't wait for his middle-age crisis. Karim becomes the artsy sexual samurai his world seems to be waiting for. Ever eager, against his better judgment, he discovers the cheap thrills of possession ("I was being kissed a lot lately: I needed the affection, I can tell you," he tells us); and in awe of Charlie's musical triumphs with his Mustn't Grumble band, Karim tries his hand at acting, which is what he has done all his life, more or less. Then the novel becomes a tad more philosophical, if you will. Karim has all the reasons for his likes and dislikes but, alas, can't quite thread them together. Actually, he admits he's fallen in love with Charlie because, like his father, he insists on standing apart. "I liked the power that they had and the attention they received. I liked the way people admired and indulged them." By then, he's a lost case.

The heightened sense of wanderlust that drowns Karim is reminiscent of—if not totally akin to—that of Sammy and Rosie, the successful, oversexed protagonists of the bittersweet Kureishi film that bears their names. But here, as opposed to the author's screenplay heroes, Karim, Charlie and the gang seem to be transacting in silence against their worst primary fear: boredom. Nothing, not even society's decay and possible demise, is more atrocious to these characters than a moment without excitement.

This is where Kureishi parts ways with his literary influences—particularly the Salman Rushdie of *Shame* and *Midnight's Children*—whose social concerns he has abandoned in search of a more yuppified style. Kureishi's characters do not seduce with ideas, as does Saleem Sinai of *Midnight's Children*; they seduce with seduction, crassly and harshly, as they fiercely explore the empty pos-

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sibilities of the dominant leisure class. When they think, they wander; when they don't, they lust.

Our redefined Oedipus doesn't really do much. Kureishi has given Karim such a narrow, albeit real, scope of interests that the only thing he can do is follow his travails and quote his friends: Louise Lawrence the onetime masseuse (who discovered socialism "in a forest of pricks and pond of semen," realizing that "nothing human was alien to me"), Richard (who "talked about wanting to fuck only black men") and Eleanor (who "worked with a woman performance artist who persuaded her to extract the texts of poems—'Cows' teeth like snowdrops bite the garlic grass'—from her vagina before reading them"). Naturally, Karim is taken by Eleanor for a while. He needs her exoticism, still believes he's nothing without a hot, adventuresome, experienced nobody by his side.

Aimlessness and glands rule the novel so powerfully that near the end, when Kureishi strives to make sense of the whole indulgent mess, the only possible recourse is the tried-and-true device of a sojourn abroad, return ticket included. Karim the actor has finally made it to New York—*he'd said he would*—where he meets Charlie the superstar again, and they move together to the East Village. Charlie has turned into a joyless, materialistic pig; Karim has fits of depression and self-hatred. He's nothing but Successful Charlie's mental yardstick: "I was a full-length mirror, but a mirror that could remember." He does—the good times, the illusions, the corners he turned in search of Charlie, the heartbreak and the accumulation of events both senseless and sensual. What's left? Predictably, the return to London, Pop's marriage proposal to Eva, a new beginning. The end.

Funny, but Kureishi is an intelligent writer—all too intelligent—to end the book with such nirvanistic complacency after a nonstop wandering hell. Something somewhere tells us that there's a sequel to the novel, which has already been optioned off for a movie. Then again, we could join with Karim in singing The Smiths' ode to nothingness: *Sixteen, clumsy and shy/I went to London and. . . .* Or perhaps we should remember Eva's lament at the beginning of the novel: "The cruellest thing you can do to Kerouac is reread him at 38." I felt a bit cruel reading Kureishi at 30. □

Rich Imaginings

CHARLOTTE INNES

SEXING THE CHERRY. *By Jeanette Winterson. Atlantic Monthly Press. 167 pp. $19.95.*

Every decade or so a new group of so-called minority writers appear, quite suddenly it seems, at the center of the American literary scene—the abruptness of their arrival simply a reflection of some new warping of market forces and cultural bias. (Typical was the intense outpouring of novels by black women in the 1970s.)

The latest group of writers just beginning to have their day in the literary sun are lesbians—that is, writers who are lesbian and whose work is obviously informed by their lesbianism. Of these, Jeanette Winterson is an outstanding example. With the publication of her fourth novel, *Sexing the Cherry*, Winterson recently received the E.M. Forster Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters for the body of her work. (This is a $5,000 award, given annually to a young English writer, to be used for travel in the United States.) Her first and third novels also won prizes in England and praise here: *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, an autobiographical coming-out story of a young lesbian raised by a family of Pentecostal Evangelists in northern England, and *The Passion*, a meditation on personal love and public hero-worship set in the Napoleonic era.

Like the black women writers, Winterson didn't spring from nowhere. There is a long if little-known tradition of lesbian fiction, ranging from treatment by French male authors in the nineteenth century, when lesbians were seen as exotic but doomed creatures, to the upbeat feminist works of the 1970s and 1980s published by small presses in the United States. Nevertheless, Winterson and a number of other writers (for example, Sarah Schulman and Margaret Erhart) appear to represent a new phase in lesbian fiction, one moving on from the themes of self-discovery and self-affirmation that have characterized the literature of the past twenty years, to engage a more complex reality.

What's exciting about Winterson is her grace as a writer with an impressive array of imaginative tools. In a style reminiscent of other fantasists, like Donald Barthelme or Italo Calvino, she takes the lesbian experience, presses it through a sieve of history, fairy tales, myth and literary allusion, mixes in a little social criticism and a lot of humor, and then shakes it to a froth on some other level of time and space. In that sense, *Sexing the Cherry* is Winterson's most ambitious creation so far. If some of its obsessions and imagery are familiar from her earlier works—discussions on the nature of time, gender and love, God, strong mothers, an affection for dogs, not to mention the use of fruit as a metaphor for the alien, the exotic or the sexually different—it is also her most metaphysical work, the furthest removed from conventional narrative and the most angrily political in tone. It is never heavy-handed, though, as Winterson charms the reader into accepting difficult concepts, like murder for revenge.

Set in two time periods—seventeenth-century Britain and the present day—*Sexing the Cherry* is devoted to the adventures of the Dog-Woman and her foundling son, Jordan, whom she fished like Moses from "the stinking Thames" and named for the biblical river. The Dog-Woman (as her name suggests) breeds dogs. She is a giantess—so heavy that as a child she broke both her father's legs when she sat in his lap, and so ugly that when once she asked a man to kiss her, he fainted. But she is also brave and earthy, with a strong personal moral code and a disdain for the hypocritical, sexually repressed Puritans with whom she does battle and sometimes kills. Jordan is the opposite, a dreamy 19-year-old who travels with the King's gardener to exotic parts of the world in search of rare plant specimens and adventure. He learns about the grafting of cherry trees (hence the title) and later brings back the pineapple to the court of Charles II. The final quarter of the book introduces Jordan and the Dog-Woman's modern alter egos: Nicholas Jordan, another sensitive youth, who joins the navy to be a hero; and a young female scientist conducting a one-woman protest against mercury pollution of the country's waterways.

This is the plot, but—this being a Winterson novel—only half the story. Fact and fantasy blur; the two time periods bump against each other. It's not even clear whether Jordan and the Dog-Woman are real or fantasies in the minds

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of the modern characters. "I don't know if other worlds exist in space or time," says the scientist. "Perhaps this is the only one and the rest is rich imaginings. Either way it doesn't matter. We have to protect both possibilities."

That sense of possibility, the power of the imagination and where it can take us, is the sinew that binds the various episodes of the book together. Through Jordan's inner explorations and the Dog-Woman's more concrete adventures, Winterson preaches free thought, unhampered by old assumptions. When a Royalist urges the Dog-Woman to heed the Old Testament saying "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," she takes him seriously and amasses a sackful of both—from narrow-minded Puritans who give her trouble. In a brothel, she does further gory damage to those hypocritical clients who chastely make love to their wives through a hole in the sheet at home and then creep after prostitutes for their real sexual pleasure.

Jordan, meanwhile, tells of a city without gravity that sails above the earth, and the twelve dancing princesses who visit it secretly at night, floating upward through their windows. During the day they disguise their ability to float by wearing long gowns. But their father finds them out and, because he wants to marry them off to twelve princes, chains them all up by the ankle. Later, the princesses do live happily ever after, "but not with [their] husbands."

As Jordan continues his inner journey it becomes clear that to think freely he must have a strong sense of self, though at first he sees it as a quest for love. He falls for the youngest princess, a dancer, who unlike her sisters managed to escape marriage. But does she really exist? It's most likely that she too is a figment of his imagination, or even an aspect of himself. As his quest becomes more elusive, images of weightlessness, dancing and light increase. "Was I searching for a dancer whose name I did not know or was I searching for the dancing part of myself?" he asks.

Ultimately, the characters in *Sexing the Cherry*, though powerfully described, are not people in a real sense but states of being. To be complete, either as men or women, Winterson seems to say, we need both the courage and directed anger of the Dog-Woman and the imaginative powers and sensitivity of Jordan—as in the process of grafting, "whereby a plant, perhaps tender or uncertain, is fused into a hardier member of its strain . . . [to] produce a third kind, without seed or parent."

If Winterson's ideas don't always soar as high as her imagination, she is more than saved by fine, clean writing, a clear vision, an earthy sense of humor and the wisdom to see there are no easy solutions, no sure happiness. There is only the search for it. "How vast it all is, this matter of the mind," says Jordan. "Each journey conceals another journey within its lines: the path not taken and the forgotten angle. These are the journeys I wish to record." □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

The State of the Art World: The Nineties Begin

If there is a crisis in art criticism today, it is because few who practice it accept the framework defined by Clement Greenberg, and yet no other framework has come to take its place. Greenberg's prestige doubtless rests upon that of the discoveries with which he is associated—of Jackson Pollock and Helen Frankenthaler, Morris Louis and Jules Olitski. But his influence is due to the explanatory theories with which he vindicated his discoveries and the implicit narratives within which he situated them historically. The theories characteristically take the form of persuasive definitions of art, which the discovered artist is held to satisfy in an exemplary way. The narrative then locates the artist in a historical progression of which she or he is the climax or goal. Greenbergian definitions are by and large essentialistic: Painting consists in XYZ and nothing more. And Greenbergian narratives tell the story of how the truth of art is revealed together with the untruth of art. The success of the framework is due to the way in which it makes sense of the present, gives structure to the past and defines the shape of the future. The price of losing the framework is that we are no longer sure what art is, and so are no longer clear about the direction of art history. If there is a crisis in criticism, there must be, for exactly parallel reasons, a crisis in art. The interesting fact is that neither crisis is felt as one, except by those whose practice is animated by a sense of the lost framework.

"It seems to be a law of modernism," Greenberg wrote, "that the conventions not essential to the viability of a medium be discarded as soon as they are recognized." The implied narrative is that of breaking through the illusion in which the merely contingent had been taken as the necessary, and thus coming to a clear philosophical vision of artistic truth. The history of Modernism is an erratic progress of self-purification. Thus the figure was discarded as contingent in pictorial representation by Abstractionists. Pictorial or illusionistic space was discarded as being inappropriate to abstraction, even if not filled with recognizable scenes and figures. Geometrical forms were discovered to be not altogether mandated by abstraction, which could be achieved by swipes of pigment across a flat surface. The brush stroke was demonstrably unrequired, as the drip-stick showed, and both were retired when it was discovered that pigment could be soaked directly into canvas, producing forms inseparable from their material substance, closing the gap between representation and reality. Even if the culmination of the sequence was not just an expanse of bare canvas, the truth of art must in any case be the history of repudiations and subtractions. The *history* of art will then seek the beginnings of Modernism in artists whose asceticism would have been invisible to their contemporaries, since so much else was taking place in their paintings that we retrospectively perceive as impurities. Manet and Cézanne struggled with pictorialism, ahead of and yet limited by their times. It was in this spirit that Roger Fry once wrote that Rembrandt would have been a far greater artist had he put the psychology for which he is irrelevantly admired into novels instead.

Essentialist theories are by their nature disenfranchising. Perhaps because much of the human meaning carried by art is bound up in the properties thrown overboard in the name of purity, their relinquishment may be perceived as a sacrifice, and it is necessary to compensate by denouncing them as not having been art in the first place. Thus, work that persists in using the figure is dismissed as not art but illustration. Painting that uses hues outside a morally endorsed range is stigmatized as mere decoration. Now, in truth, the posture of disenfranchisement has characterized artistic attitudes in the West at least since Vasari. For Vasari, Michelangelo was the climax and the goal of art history. This evaluation was vindicated by the theory that art is the progressive conquest of visual appearances, the

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narrative of which Vasari proceeded to write, from its beginnings in Cimabue down to his luminous present. Notoriously, Vasari had only contempt for Gothic art. But until well into the 1960s, it was standard for purists in sculpture or painting to draw the boundaries of art around themselves, leaving in outer darkness whatever failed their criteria of austerity.

Only rarely (except in the U.S. Congress) does one hear it said today that something that looks like and is responded to as art is not art at all. Even in his recommendation that the images of Robert Mapplethorpe not be exhibited at taxpayer expense, Hilton Kramer did not insist that they were not art. In a recent amiable debate with Barbara Rose, I was told, with startling numerical precision, that 60 percent of what is being shown in New York galleries is not art; but I took that merely as a vehement way of saying that she liked 40 percent of what New York galleries show (which is pretty generous, everything considered). My own sense is that art *has* an essence, but its components must be specified with such abstractness that no stylistic imperatives can be derived from them. The consequence is that if you want to pursue the nature of art in a serious way, you must embark upon the formal study of philosophy. But the stylistic neutrality of a philosophical definition leaves the practice of making art intoxicatingly open.

The collapse of the Greenbergian paradigm might almost convince a skeptic of the dialectical nature of history, for it was very much a victim of its own success. As less and less was permitted and more and more forbidden in the name of true art, it became increasingly clear that "progress," if not over with entirely, was close enough to its end that further advances were apt to be minute in proportion to the energy of further research. If the all-white paintings of Robert Ryman, the single-stripe paintings of Barnett Newman, the grids of Agnes Martin were not the end of painting, it was fairly obvious that the end of painting was to consist of works not impressively different from theirs. And if there was close to nothing left to do in the history of art, one might as well forget about making history and go one's own way. Robert Colescott, in a video that accompanied his retrospective at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, said he appreciated that art consisted of making stripes, but that Newman had already done that. That gave him license to opt out of history and make those wonderfully funky pictures that, in his words, "put blacks into art history." Jenny Holzer mused in a recent interview that she wanted something more than "pretty good third-generation stripe painting." In my view, since 1970 at least, artists have been working outside the framework of history as defined by essentialism. In the wonderful Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts show of women artists, "Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move Into the Mainstream, 1970–1985" [see "Art," December 25, 1989], there were about as many directions as there were individuals. There was, in the early 1980s, a market-driven effort to put history back on track with Neo-Expressionism, but this turned out to be just further posthistorical art pretending to inevitability. The 1980s proved to be a jumble of artistic activity, which anyone can verify from "The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980's," itself a kind of jumble, on view at the New Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art.

So the critic is obliged to navigate the season without compass or criterion (the "new" criterion is the old criterion, with its obligatory intolerances). We have just entered a new decade without the sense of having left the previous one. Paradoxically, the 1990s began with a number of remarkable shows, and perhaps I can convey some of the feeling of the historical present—and in some measure make up for not having responded to them while they were up—by offering a few bits of critical writing to suit the heterogeneity of the scene to which they are a disjunctive response. This will be criticism for which I am no better able to give a framework than I am able to give a unified characterization of the works. There is a famous passage in Wittgenstein in which he seeks to replace the old notion of a class, where all members share a set of defining properties, with what he terms a "family resemblance," where members may belong without sharing any obvious properties, though of course there will be members of the family who do share some. The six shows I want to describe have been arranged as a family resemblance group.

Dorothea Rockburne in some ways looks most like an essentialist artist, since her work has seemed rather geometrical and she likes to say that she reads mathematics and logic texts for inspiration and recreation. In recent years, the characteristic Rockburne work has been composed of white or black squares, triangles or lozenges, made of pieces of paper neatly folded back onto themselves, which, though fixed to a background, straddle some border between painting and relief. The folded shapes touch one another and are regimented into larger—one might say molecular—structures. The folds always convey an acute sense of mystery, of concealed secrets, as in sealed messages, eloquently blank. Her show at the André Emmerich Gallery in December-January represented a natural evolution from this format, yet at the same time it was altogether unpredictable. She showed what she called "Cut-Ins"—large paper works in which the principal forms, while recognizably Euclidean, showed deviationist tendencies, as if they were political allegories, and bore colors of a kind it might have occurred to an Egyptian dyer to employ so that Joseph's coat should be a chromatic astonishment: porphyry, lapis lazuli, the gold of gold leaf, the orange of sea urchins, malachite green, rose of Sharon, coral pink and the yellow of maize. The forms overlap and lend their outside edges to a sort of frame, cut in such a way as to surround them precisely, and giving, because of the thickness of the board from which its parts are made, a certain depth. Within the cutout space the florid shapes mingle, rigid and ephemeral at once, to form visionary structures. The titles are often meditative fragments taken from Pascal.

Robert Mangold's work, shown at the Paula Cooper Gallery, is also, these days, a form of dissident geometry, minimalist work on holiday, fighting off elegance by refusing to endure the tyranny of Euclidean stereotypes. Saul Steinberg once did a marvelous series of drawings in which various shapes and figures dream of their ideal embodiments: There is, for example, a polyhedron that has all it can do to keep its six sides adjacent and its corners reasonably acute, whose dream it is to be a perfect cube, with sharp edges and snappy vertices, labeled with the right kinds of letters, precisely inscribed. Mangold's shapes are the inverse of this, what squares with bohemian aspirations might long to be, with crazy corners and unequal sides, perfectly useless for visualizing important theorems, and with tacky surfaces besides (freestanding, the forms are three-dimensional enough to cast heavy shadows, though only their

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surfaces count). But they do come in pairs, one of them a frame formed of four triangles which leave a squarish hole in the middle, and one with a roundish shape that, if it belonged to the cross section of an elliptical peg, is clearly wrong for its partner's opening. Nevertheless, they achieve a marvelous harmony and a monumental presence. In some way they belong to the same family as Rockburne's Cut-Ins—if you think of the Karamazovs as one kind of family.

David Reed's paintings make no use whatever of three-dimensionality, with their perfectly classical edges and their surfaces as polished as Ingres's, so much so that one wonders if they might be photographs. Their formats are unusual in being either very wide in proportion to their height or very high in proportion to their width. One is immediately struck by the sense of a wide brush moving up the narrow column of the vertical canvases, or within the tunnellike space of the horizontal ones. But the brush-play is not gestural so much as it is the shape of highly energized spiral or helical forms winding, like abstract snakes or dragons, through dark Baroque spaces. Reed in fact is an altogether Baroque artist, abstracting to his own ends the *figura serpentinata* of the seventeenth-century ecstatic (or agonized) saint or martyr or angel, so the works have the spiritual density of altarpieces. Often, Reed inserts subpanels into his spaces, like predella images, episodes in the churning destiny of his whorled subjects. His colors belong to a different universe than Rockburne's and seem like the products of some polymeric chemistry, with futurist hues. But there was one dramatically vertical piece in his exhibition at Max Protetch's: an upsurge of pale green against dark green, sea colors, and the form like water cascading upward, as if the fluid energy of Hokusai's great wave were trapped in a chasm and forced to ascend with a roar.

I place Cindy Sherman's marvelous show at Metro Pictures next. Sherman's brilliant appropriation, in the late 1970s, of the format of the "still," with its implied narrative in which she was the nameless starlet, became the focus of so much neostructuralist, radical feminist, Frankfurt School Marxist and semiological hermeneutics that one is convinced there must be whole programs of study in institutions of higher learning in which one can major, or even earn a doctorate, in Sherman Studies. What is remarkable about the stills, despite the excrescence of theory that has attached itself to them like barnacles, is how vivid and immediate they remain as works of art. In her new show she simply took over the genre of the historical portrait, and did so with the same sense of assurance with which she took over a marginal photographic artifact and gave it the deepest human meaning. But her mode of reference to the past is different from David Reed's. Reed brings the Baroque into contemporary sensibility. Sherman imposes a contemporary sensibility onto the Baroque style of portraiture, in which the self-important scholars and courtiers, mistresses and ministers, dukes and reformers, inquisitors and virgins, allowed themselves to be forever fixed; and she applies to them so powerful a sense of their absurdity that all the solemn power leaks out, leaving behind sets of conventions that men and women could put on or take off, like wigs and farthingales. It was an intoxicatingly intelligent show, not least of all because of the way she slipped out from under the clichés of Sherman Studies and stood free of her theoreticians—the bride stripping the bachelors bare, even.

As Sherman appropriated and assimilated the Old Master portrait, Mark Tansey made his own the style of illustration, protophotographic, that one finds in books for boys and girls circa 1912, and whose most familiar representative might be Sidney Paget, whose illustrations for the Sherlock Holmes stories have fixed the great detective's image forever. It is striking how this almost styleless style would have come to be dated, as much so as the postures and costumes it was so good at illustrating, and how a postmodern master should now use it for his artful allegories. Tansey has even borrowed the famous image of Holmes and Professor Moriarty, wrestling at Reichenbach Falls, for a witty painting titled *Derrida Queries de Man*, in which the two heroes of contemporary literary theory undertake, at precipice edge, to deconstruct each other to smithereens. The theme of the show at the Curt Marcus Gallery was "the world as text," an essentially Derridian conceit, according to which text and subject are so indistinguishable that the world might just as well be made of language, there being "nothing outside the text." The crags and cliffs at Reichenbach Falls are literally made of words, though we cannot read what they say, so thickly are they painted

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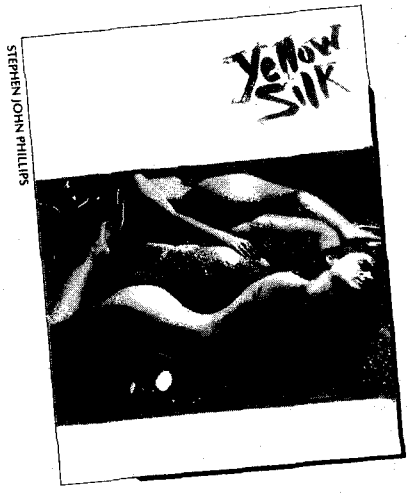

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over one another. (Well, Derrida is not that easy to read either.) These large, monochrome works are stunning transformations of philosophical ideas, punning and allusive, and they display an almost pyrotechnic virtuosity.

The idea of pyrotechny brings us to Jennifer Bartlett's "Fire Paintings," shown at Paula Cooper's in the chill weeks of January. Bartlett is the least essentialist of artists, though her famous work *Rhapsody*, which was intended to "have everything in it," required her to reduce "everything" to some set of primitive elements out of which the universe should then be compounded. The elements of *Rhapsody* were: mountains, trees, water and houses. In recent years, Bartlett has replaced this somewhat homemade cosmology with the traditional pre-Socratic one of earth, air, water and fire; and she has resolved to spend two years on each of these elements. The Fire Paintings represent the first stage of this tremendous ambition, and these vast and brushy paintings, as suitably flamboyant as their flammeous subject and spirited creator, have, if not everything in them, certainly everything that crossed Bartlett's mind as connected with fire as destroyer, foundation and preserver. Certain objects—cones, rings, grills and octagonal tables—appear not just as depicted but also half sculpturally, as protruding from the canvases, and finally as fully sculptural, standing before the canvases to which they refer. One was put in mind of the funeral pyre of Patroclus, of the conflagration of Valhalla, of the Fire Sermon of Buddha, of the flame death of martyrs—but also of the habitat of salamanders, of roast pig, grilled fish and bread fragrant from the oven. Not essentialist, but *of* one of the essences, the Fire Paintings express the exuberant pluralism of the age.

Incurable essentialists now know how to proceed: Anything is a work of art that resembles the works in these six shows as much as they resemble one another. As a constellation (to which several more stars might be added had I space to do so), they do not so much tell us where art is heading as encourage us to ask whether that question any longer heads us in a useful critical direction. □

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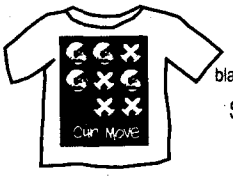

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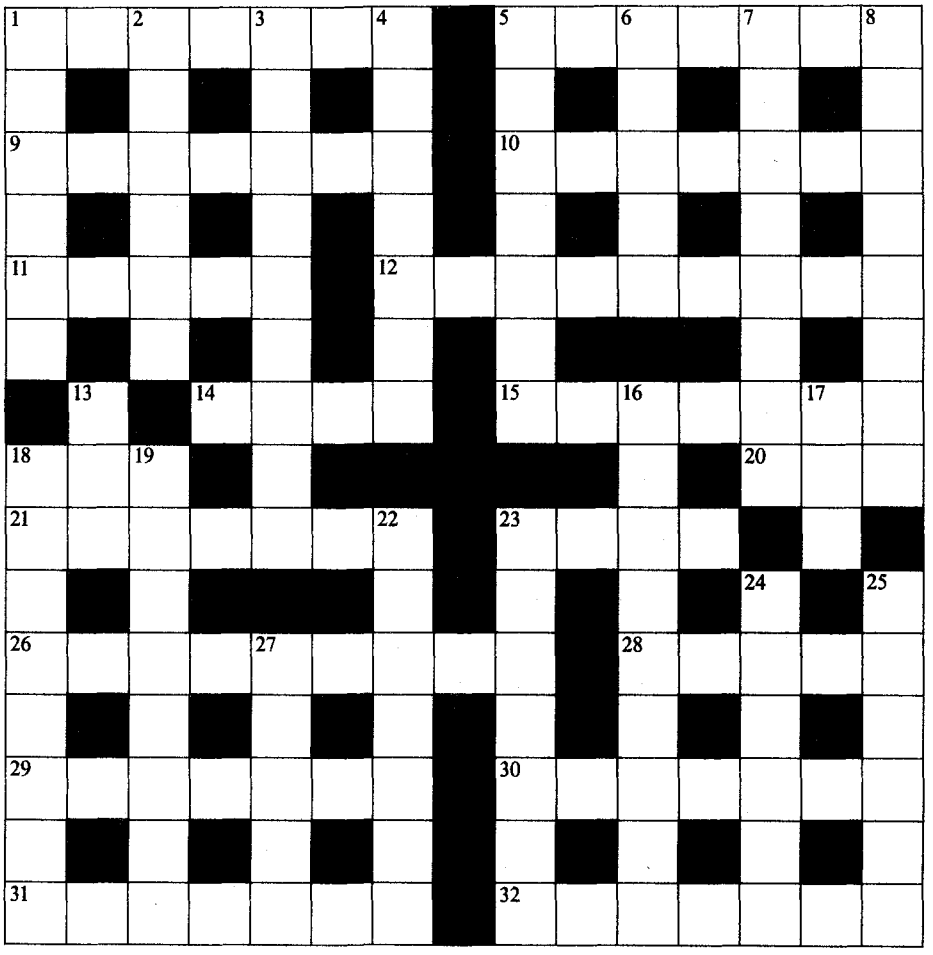

ACROSS

1 Speech shows where we live, of course. (7)
5 Boat comparatively like 9? (7)
9 and 25 down Possibly a boxer who spreads terror around the world at first, going on 8. (13)
10 You near this place to dig something up inside it. (7)
11 Free from error. (5)
12 See 17 down
14 See 28
15 Most people don't know when they are kept! (7)
18 Composed an ode for one with reputedly soft eyes. (3)
20 The woman who is bent on winning, in play? (3)
21 A false step by one in Berlin, and you'll see someone well known as a chiseler. (7)
23 The usual foods for a formal assembly. (4)
26 There's no satisfaction in being so. (9)
28 and 14 Don't open 1-1 and 2-2, for example, since many families have them. (5,4)
29 Might be seen as tales fit for the season. (3,4)
30 If your nose is this, you might take 3. (7)
31 Drives associated with fetes, of a sort. (4,3)
32 One of the things you might hope to get for a penny. (7)

DOWN

1 and 18 down Sand associated with this artistic figure? (6,2,6)
2 See 13
3 Getting in deep, her solution seems to involve medicine. (9)
4 Makes bad priests, but good fairies. (7)
5 Velour's not exactly right for windows, perhaps. (7)
6 Is he known for a hand which is not long formed? (5)
7 It could be a sect about to make a mistake concerning places such as O'Hara wrote from. (7)
8 What the judge does in a retrial, to a point one does it for show. (8)
13 and 2 The best artist, at least best to the British! (3,6)
16 A sign of sound increase? (9)
17 and 22, and 12 across Was Williams' dark sort of thing connected with an Arawak-named animal? (3,5,2,3,6)
18 See 1 down
19 Take little notice there's a way out around it! (It might be fun!) (8)
22 See 17 down
23 The encyclopedist acted, and then tore up the rest. (7)
24 One of the little women with such as the great 1 down which is only kidding! (6)
25 See 9 across
27 Time to make one helpful to such as 18? (5)

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